

In this March 5, 2008 photo, former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert speaks at the state Capitol in Springfield, Ill. Federal prosecutors have indicted Thursday, May 28, 2015, the former U.S. House Speaker on bank-related charges. (AP Photo/Seth Perlman)



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CDC investigating error that caused live anthrax shipping

ROBERT BURNS
BRADY McCOMBS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Army's top general said Thursday that human error probably was not a factor in the Army's mistaken shipment of live anthrax samples from a chemical weapons testing site that was opened more than 70 years ago in a desolate stretch of desert in Utah. Gen. Ray Odierno, the Army chief of staff, told reporters the problem may have been a failure in the technical process of killing, or inactivating, anthrax samples. The process in this case "might not have completely killed" the samples as intended before they were shipped, he said.

Odierno said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is investigating that aspect of what went wrong at Dugway Proving Ground, the Army installation in Utah that sent the anthrax to government and commercial labs in at least nine states across the U.S. and to an Army lab in South Korea.

Officials said the government labs that received the suspect anthrax were

Naval Surface Warfare Center in Virginia. The rest were commercial labs, which the Pentagon has declined to identify, citing legal constraints. The Edgewood center, which describes itself as the nation's principal research and development resource for non-medical chemical and biological defense, in turn transferred some samples it received from Dugway to other labs in the U.S.

CDC spokesman Jason McDonald said four people at labs in Delaware, Texas and Wisconsin were recommended to get antibiotics as a precaution, although they are not sick. U.S. officials at Osan Air Base in South Korea said the anthrax bacteria it received for training purposes "might not be an inert training sample as expected," and as a result was destroyed by hazardous materials teams Wednesday.

About two dozen people were being treated for possible exposure at Osan. Odierno said normal procedures had been followed, and that he was not aware that such a problem had surfaced pre-



Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno speaks on Capitol Hill in Washington. Human error probably was not a factor in the Army's mistaken shipment of live anthrax samples to numerous Odierno told reporters the problem may have been a failure in the technical process of killing, or inactivating, anthrax samples. The process in this case "might not have completely killed" the samples as intended before they were shipped, he said.

at the Army's Edgewood Chemical Biological Center in Maryland and the

viously at Dugway. But there have been at least two other question-

able incidents at the site 85 miles west of Salt Lake City that has been testing

chemical and biological warfare weapons since it was opened in 1942 after the attack on Pearl Harbor. In 2011, Dugway was locked down for 12 hours because less than one-fourth of a teaspoon of VX nerve agent was unaccounted for. The agent affects the body's ability to carry messages through the nerves.

Military officials launched an internal investigation, but the results were not released. Questions about the incident were not answered Thursday by military officials. Gov. Gary Herbert said in 2011 that he met with the base commander and that the issue had been resolved to his satisfaction. In 1968, the test site came under scrutiny when 6,000 sheep died nearby. An Army report produced two years later out of Maryland acknowledged

that the nerve agent was found in snow and grass samples where the sheep died. The Salt Lake Tribune reported based on a report that was declassified in 1978. An Army spokesman said in the late 1990s that the Army does not accept responsibility for the sheep deaths, saying state agriculture scientists never identified the cause of death. Steve Erickson, of a volunteer military watchdog group called the Citizens Education Project, said the latest anthrax incident isn't cause for panic but suggests more oversight is needed.

"Ever since 9/11, there's been a propensity to throw money at biodefense," Erickson said. "When you allow these activities to blossom and burgeon over a period of years without any effective oversight, you are asking for trouble." □

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George Pataki announces run for the Republican nomination

ALEXANDER BURNS

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EXETER, N.H. - It had the outlines of a significant event: A three-term governor of New York, who forced Mario M. Cuomo from office and led his state through the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, announced Thursday that he is running for president.

But as the former governor, George E. Pataki, prepared in recent weeks to announce his candidacy, he conceded to friends and allies that he was an extreme long shot for the Republican nomination. Once a formidable figure in the party, Pataki has entertained campaigns for the presidency numerous times over the years, seemingly waiting for the perfect moment - only to jump in now, when his profile has waned.

Pataki declared his candidacy Thursday in an address to supporters in New Hampshire. The former governor vowed to enact far-ranging changes

in Washington, pointing to his record of attacking government spending and entrenched Democratic interests.

"After 12 years of my conservative policies, we replaced dependency with opportunity, resignation with hope, mere existence with dreams, a welfare check with a paycheck," Pataki said, adding, "I know we can do the same thing for the United States."

Perspiring under the lights in Exeter's crowded town hall, Pataki laid out a vision that veered from the politically mundane (cutting taxes on manufacturers) to the soaring (curing cancer and Alzheimer's in the next decade). He pledged to slash the federal workforce and called for aggressive military action against the Islamic State, including the possible deployment of U.S. troops.

Pataki, who left office in 2006, is an unlikely match for the Republican Party of 2016. A former Yale debater with an easy public demeanor, he supports abortion rights and pushed as governor for anti-discrimination rules protecting gays.

He invokes Theodore Roosevelt, the Republican environmentalist and crusader against corporate power, as a political hero.

In recent elections, the Republican base has gravitated mainly toward more

pugilistic candidates with more orthodox conservative views.

It may be difficult for Pataki,

A Pataki-for-president campaign has been long in coming, and there is a heavy sense of anticlimax

veloper Earle I. Mack, Pataki joked that some things simply happened every four years: the Olympics,



Former New York Gov. George Pataki announces his plans to seek the Republican nomination for president, Thursday, May 28, 2015, at the historic town hall in Exeter, N.H.

(AP Photo/Jim Cole)

ki, 69, to raise money for his campaign, or to qualify for national debates. His hope of making a mark depends almost completely on New Hampshire, the only Northeastern state with an early primary, and the only spot where Pataki's social views might find an audience.

"He sees and believes that there's an opportunity in New Hampshire to put himself forth in this race," said Alfonse M. D'Amato, a former Republican senator from New York and a longtime ally of Pataki.

to the announcement: In 1998, Pataki declined to pledge that he would serve a full second term as governor, raising the prospect of a national campaign that never jelled. Before the 2008 and 2012 elections, Pataki formed committees to help prepare for White House bids that did not materialize. Pataki has acknowledged the here-we-go-again dimension to his 2016 effort. At a gathering of political donors, hosted this year by the wealthy real estate de-

for instance, and George Pataki's visiting New Hampshire.

But Pataki insisted that he was serious this time, said an attendee, who requested anonymity to speak about a private event.

For a time, Pataki seemed to represent the resurgence of moderate Republicanism, along with his fellow Northeastern governors, including Christie Whitman of New Jersey and Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania, as well as Rudy Giuliani, then the mayor of New York City. □

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Former Speaker Hastert indicted on federal charges



In this Aug. 17, 2007 photo, former House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., speaks in Yorkville, Ill. Federal prosecutors have indicted Thursday, May 28, 2015, the former U.S. House Speaker on bank-related charges.

(AP Photo/Brian Kersey)

MICHAEL TARM

Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Federal prosecutors announced bank-related charges against former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert on Thursday, accusing the 73-year-old Illinois Republican of withdrawing \$952,000 in cash in a way that evaded the requirement that banks report cash transactions over \$10,000. He's also accused of lying to the FBI.

Hastert, a former high school wrestling coach, was a little known lawmaker from suburban Chicago

who rose to become one of the most powerful people in Washington — serving as House speaker for eight years, making him the longest-serving Republican in that position.

Each count of the indictment carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, according to a statement from the U.S. attorney's office in Chicago.

The Associated Press left a phone message seeking comment with a person at Hastert's Washington, D.C., office.

It was not immediately re-

turned.

Hastert did not immediately return a message left on his cellphone seeking comment, or respond to an email.

From 2010 to 2014, Hastert withdrew a total of approximately \$1.7 million in cash from various bank accounts and provided it to a person identified only as Individual A, according to the indictment.

In December last year, "Hastert falsely stated that he was keeping the cash" when questioned by the FBI, the prosecutor's statement says. □





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Obama says US storms a reminder to prep for disasters



President Barack Obama tours the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Thursday, May 28, 2015, to draw attention to preparedness in advance of the annual storm season that formally begins June 1.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

D. SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — President Barack Obama said Thursday the deadly flooding in Texas and Oklahoma should serve as a reminder of the need to make the nation more resilient to the impact of natural disasters, adding that climate change is affecting both the pace and intensity of

storms. Making the first visit of his presidency to the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Obama said that while the nation is better prepared than ever for the storms of today, "the best scientists in the world are telling us that extreme weather events, like hurricanes, are likely to become more powerful." "When you combine stron-

ger storms with rising seas, that's a recipe for more devastating floods," he said. Obama said that while the technology for forecasting storms has improved and there are better ways to disseminate warnings, the nation also must stay focused on "becoming more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate that are

having significant effects on both the pace and intensity of some of these storms." Obama spoke one day after government weather forecasters predicted six to 11 storms this season, with three to six of them developing into hurricanes. That suggests this year's hurricane season may be slower than average: From 1981 to 2010, the average has been 12 named storms, 6 hurricanes

and three major hurricanes per year. The season starts Monday. This week's storms and floods in Texas and Oklahoma have left at least 21 people dead and at least 10 others missing. During his tour, Obama checked out giant screens showing maps of the Eastern Seaboard and asked questions about the science used to develop forecasts, warning and storm surge predictions. □

Swollen rivers keep Texas on flood watch

JUAN A. LOZANO
SETH ROBBINS

Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Many Texas cities remain in danger though a barrage of deadly thunderstorms has tapered, as officials warn about the possibility of more flooding from rain-swollen rivers. The storms and floods in Texas and Oklahoma this week have left at least 21 people dead and at least 10 others missing. In suburban Houston, the rains have pushed the San Jacinto River above flood stage, and its waters were expected to cover streets

in subdivisions along the west fork of the river, possibly stranding people in their homes for days if they don't leave. In Wharton, about 60 miles southwest of Houston, the mayor asked residents to voluntarily evacuate about 300 homes on the west side of the city due to the predicted rise of the Colorado River. In the Parker County town of Horseshoe Bend in North Texas, officials asked about 250 residents to leave their homes as the Brazos River was expected to rise above its flood stage of 21 feet (6.4 meters) on Thursday.

Meanwhile, in Central Texas, crews continued searching for nine people feared dead after the swollen Blanco River smashed through Wimberley, a small tourist town between San Antonio and Austin, over the Memorial Day weekend. In Houston, residents whose homes were flooded by torrential rains on Monday and Tuesday also continued their cleanup efforts. While the Houston area got a respite from rainy weather for most of Wednesday, the heavy rains from earlier in the week were still making their way downstream. □

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Colorado prosecutors build case that Holmes was sane

DAN ELLIOTT

Associated Press

CENTENNIAL, Colorado

(AP) — Prosecutors are methodically building a case that James Holmes knew right from wrong when he planned and carried out the deadly Colorado cinema shootings, hoping to convince jurors he should be convicted and executed and not sent to a mental hospital.

Holmes pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity in the July 20, 2012, attack on a suburban Denver movie theater, which killed 12 people, wounded 58 and injured 12.

After a month of testimony from victims and investigators, prosecutors this week shifted to Holmes' mental state. They showed jurors notes that Holmes made on how long it would take police to respond to an attack on the theater as well as a dating website profile on which he asked, "Will



In this June 4, 2013 photo Aurora theater shooting suspect James Holmes appears in court in Centennial, Colo. Prosecutors in the Colorado theater shooting trial say they are moving closer toward the heart of their case: whether Holmes was legally insane when he committed one of the worst mass shootings in U.S. history.

(Andy Cross/The Denver Post via AP)

you visit me in prison?"

A state-appointed psychiatrist who examined Holmes, William Reid, is expected to

testify Thursday. Prosecutor George Brauchler has already told jurors the doctor concluded Holmes was

legally sane.

In the coming days, prosecutors also plan to show 22 hours of videotaped interviews that Reid conducted with Holmes. They will periodically stop the video to question Reid about the conversations.

Under Colorado law, the burden of proof is Brauchler's team to convince the jury that Holmes was sane. On Tuesday, they showed jurors a notebook Holmes kept, with scribbled maps and cramped handwriting that sketched out a chilling list of choices: mass murder or serial murder, attack a theater or an airport, use guns, bombs or biological warfare.

It details which auditoriums in the theater complex had the fewest exits and offered the least chance he would be detected. One map shows the theater complex and a nearby police station and National Guard building. "ETA response (is

about) 3 mins.," Holmes wrote.

Coupled with other prosecution evidence about Holmes' behavior, the notebook is a serious blow to the defense, said Steven Pitt, a forensic psychiatrist who has worked on sanity cases but isn't involved in the Holmes trial.

The defense has said Holmes suffers from schizophrenia and the disease had so distorted his mind that he did not know right from wrong — Colorado's standard for an insanity verdict. But the notebook "speaks to his appreciation of wrongfulness," Pitt said. Mental illness alone is not enough to satisfy an insanity verdict in Colorado, he noted.

Pitt said the notebook does provide the defense with strong evidence Holmes was mentally ill, which they could use to argue against the death penalty if he is convicted. □

Miami:

Kenyan pleads guilty in terrorism support case

CURT ANDERSON

AP Legal Affairs Writer

MIAMI (AP) — A Kenyan man pleaded guilty in the U.S. on Thursday to terrorism support charges in a case that involved Internet chat room and other online communications with undercover FBI operatives. Mohamed Said pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to provide material support to foreign terrorist organizations.

A factual statement signed by Said identifies those groups as al-Shabaab in Africa and extremist organizations operating in Syria, including al-Qaida.

Said, 27, faces a maximum 15-year prison term when he is sentenced Aug. 14 by U.S. District Judge Ursula Ungaro.

A co-defendant, Gufran Mohammed, is already serving that same 15-year sentence after pleading guilty last year.

The case evolved from FBI monitoring of Internet

chat rooms frequented by Muslim extremists, according to court documents. FBI undercover employees posed as online terrorism recruiters and fundraisers in communications with both Mohammed and Said, who were both overseas.

Said admitted in the factual statement that in 2011 he received more than \$11,600 in wire transfers from Mohammed for al-Shabaab and that he had told Mohammed later, "I sent it and it was distributed among the mujahedeen."

"I am sending more this week (Allah willing)," Mohammed wrote back.

Said's defense had centered on claims that prosecutors could not prove he was the person typing on a computer in Africa when the incriminating communications were sent. But according to authorities, Said admitted his involvement in terrorism in conversations with inmates at a Miami detention center. □

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US Financial Front:

Why a shrinking US economy last quarter isn't cause for fear



A man welds parts in fans for industrial ventilation systems at the Robinson Fans Inc. plant in Harmony, Pa. On Friday, the government will likely say the economy shrank in the January-March quarter for a second straight year, but steady job gains are widely expected to propel modestly healthy growth for the rest of 2015.

(AP Photo/Keith Srakocic)

MARTIN CRUTSINGER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Another first quarter of the year. Another reversal for the U.S. economy. Another expectation of a rebound to come.

On Friday, the government will likely estimate that the economy shrank in the January-March quarter for a second straight year, depressed by brutal weather, a reeling energy sector and an export slump caused by a higher-valued dollar. Yet few will see any cause for panic.

Steady job gains are widely expected to propel modestly healthy growth for the rest of 2015. A harsh winter is gone. So is a labor dispute that slowed trade at West Coast ports. Home sales and construction are rebounding. Business investment is picking up. Many economists also suspect that the government's calculations have tended to underestimate growth in the first quarter of

each year.

Some sectors of the economy do remain subpar. Energy drillers, for example, have been damaged by persistently low energy prices and are still cutting jobs and slowing production. The rise in the dollar is still making U.S. manufactured goods pricier overseas. Yet the outlook has brightened considerably since winter. Most economists expect lower gas prices eventually to accelerate consumer spending, the main fuel for the economy. Analysts generally foresee the economy growing at an annual rate of 2 percent to 2.5 percent in the current April-June quarter, with further strengthening later in the year. That pace would mark a significant gain from the 0.8 percent annualized drop they expect the government to report Friday in its revised estimate for the January-March quarter, according to a survey by FactSet.

A quarterly economic de-

cline would be the first since the economy shrank by an even sharper 2.1 percent annual rate in the first quarter of 2014. That quarter, too, was depressed in part by a bleak winter, which kept many consumers home and some businesses closed.

In its first estimate a month ago, the government reported that the economy grew at a scant 0.2 percent rate in the January-March quarter.

That figure is expected to be sharply downgraded in part because economists think the U.S. trade deficit — the gap between the

value of exports and the larger value of imports — will be more than first estimated.

The stronger dollar hasn't only made U.S.-produced goods more expensive overseas. It's also made imports cheaper for U.S. consumers. That combination produces a wider trade gap, which slows growth. Some also think business stockpiling didn't bolster growth last quarter as much as first estimated.

"We got hit with a double-whammy in the first quarter," said Sung Won Sohn, an economics professor at California State University,

Channel Islands. "We had a lot of adverse factors, from the harsh weather and consumers unwilling to spend their gas savings to a stronger dollar and weak economies overseas making the trade deficit larger." So far, most consumers haven't used their gasoline savings to spend much more on other goods and services. The average U.S. pump price reached \$2.03 a gallon in January, the lowest level in eight years. Though the average has risen back to \$2.74, according to AAA, that's still nearly a dollar below its point a year ago. □

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US gambling market saturated, yet casinos keep on coming

WAYNE PARRY
Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) —

The casino market in the northeastern United States is saturated, yet that's not stopping some states from approving gambling legislation and companies from building new gambling halls.

That's the consensus of participants at a major casino conference in Atlantic City.

Eugene Johnson, of Spectrum Gaming Group, says by the end of this year, there will be 60 casinos in the northeast. That figure will grow to 65 by 2018, according to his colleague, Joe Weinert.

"There's not a politician in the land who is going to choose a tax increase when gaming looks so good on paper," said Wendy Hamilton, general manager of Philadelphia's SugarHouse casino. "We have to avoid the siren song. There's not a zip



A gambler talks with a dealer during a game of roulette at the Tropicana casino in Atlantic City N.J. Participants at a major gambling conference in Atlantic City on Thursday May 28, 2015, said the northeastern U.S. casino market is saturated, but noted that's not stopping new casinos from being built.

(AP Photo/Wayne Parry)

code in the region that doesn't have four or five (gambling) options within an hour."

Asked if casino closings outside New Jersey are likely, she said nothing appears imminent, but "of course

it's going to happen" if expansion continues at its current pace.

"Pennsylvania doesn't care what happens to New Jersey, and New York doesn't care what happens to Pennsylvania," she said. "It just can't go on forever. There's a finite amount of gaming revenue out there. We are in a very volatile time and we're in a frenzy of gaming expansion. It needs to stop."

Ed Sutor, president of Dover Downs casino in Delaware, said the entire mid-Atlantic region saw decreasing revenue in the first quarter of this year.

"New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland — the entire market is down," he said. "That is, friends, saturation. You're just moving money around. You bring in a new operator and the money just moves around and the entire market doesn't go up."

Sutor noted his state is considering adding three more

casinos, which he said "makes no sense."

Atlantic City has lost half its casino revenue and thousands of jobs to competition from Pennsylvania, which is now under pressure from casinos in Ohio and Maryland, said William Ryan Jr. chairman of the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board.

"We in Pennsylvania know the competition we now confront will always be there, and the days of double digit growth in that area are probably gone," he said. More casinos are planned soon for Philadelphia, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maryland and New York. Hamilton noted that a planned second Philadelphia casino is being appealed to the state Supreme Court.

"There's a lot of competition right now," she said. "If you look at the entire mid-Atlantic region, you've got people really hammering each other to win people over." □

Pending US home sales jump to strongest level in 9 years

JOSH BOAK
AP Economics Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) —

Americans signed contracts to buy homes in April at the fastest pace in nearly nine years, evidence that steady job growth is strengthening the real estate market.

The National Association of Realtors said Thursday that its seasonally adjusted pending home sales index climbed 3.4 percent to 112.4 last month. It's the fourth consecutive monthly gain. The index now stands at its highest level since May 2006.

"The confidence has returned to housing, not only as shelter but as a good long-term investment," said Ron Peltier, CEO of Berkshire Hathaway's real estate affiliate, HomeServices of America.

The upswing comes after a year of strong hiring, which has heightened demand to buy houses. Increased sales should help

bolster the economy, but the surge could potentially destabilize the housing market, Peltier cautioned. Inventories remain low, causing home values to rise at a pace that is eclipsing wage growth.

Signed contracts are a barometer of future purchases. A one- to two-month lag usually exists between a contract and a completed sale.

Pending sales increased in the Northeast, Midwest and South, while barely edging upward in the West. Greater demand has fueled sales growth this year after a lackluster 2014. Still, there is evidence that limited inventories are beginning to weigh on the market.

Sales of existing homes fell slightly between April and March to an annual clip of 5.04 million last month, the Realtors reported last week. The decrease may reflect complications in finalizing sales in addition to the shortage of listings. □



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Kurdish fighters in Syria on the march against IS militants

BASSEM MROUE
Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — In contrast to the Iraqi army's failures, Kurdish fighters in Syria are on the march against the Islamic State group, capturing towns and villages in an oil-rich swath of the country's northeast under the cover of U.S.-led airstrikes. As the Kurds close in on Tel Abyad, a major commercial center on the Turkish border, their advance highlights the decisive importance of combining airstrikes with the presence of a cohesive and motivated ally on the ground — so clearly absent in Iraq. In Syria, a country now split mostly between al-Qaida-style militants and forces loyal to President Bashar Assad, the U.S. has found a reliable partner in the country's main Kurdish fighting force, known as the YPG. They are moderate, mostly secular fighters,

driven by revolutionary fervor and deep conviction in their cause.

Since the beginning of May, they have wrested back more than 200 Kurdish and Christian towns in northeastern Syria, as well as strategic mountains seized earlier by IS. Along the way, they have picked up ammunition, weapons and vehicles left behind by Islamic State fighters.

The push has gotten them closer to Tel Abyad, a major avenue for commerce for the extremist group through which it smuggles foreign fighters and sells black-market oil to help fund its conquests. The city is also a key link between Turkey and the northern Syrian city of Raqqa, the Islamic State group's de-facto capital in its self-declared caliphate.

"The YPG doesn't lack a will to fight, like soldiers in the Syrian army, or soldiers



Kurdish female fighters of the YPG, carry their weapons as they walk in the frontline of Kery Sa-bee village, northeast Syria. (YPG via AP)

in the Iraqi army who mostly fight for a salary," said Wladimir van Wilgenburg, a Middle East analyst at the Jamestown Foundation in Washington. "The YPG

is much more motivated than other forces in the region, and doesn't lack cohesion and doesn't have coordination problems."

"The YPG is quite ideologi-

cal, while the Syrian and Iraqi army aren't very well motivated," van Wilgenburg added.

Continued on Page 27

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Greece could use 'Zambia' option as progress on deal unclear



Greece's Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, center, looks on during a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Athens, Greece, on Thursday, May 28, 2015. Greece says it aims to clinch a deal with its creditors by Sunday, a development that would allow it to receive the desperately needed final installment of its international bailout plan and prevent a default.
(AP Photo/Yorgos Karahalidis)

**E. BECATOROS
D. GATOPOULOS
Associated Press**

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Greece and rescue lenders remained at odds over whether the two sides are close to a breakthrough in negotiations, as the International Monetary Fund confirmed Thursday that Athens had the right to ask for "bundled" repayments next month.

"Countries do have the option of bundling when they have a series of payments in a given month ... making a single payment at the end of that month," IMF spokesman William Murray said in Washington.

He said Athens hadn't made a request to combine repayments, adding that the last country to do so was Zambia three decades ago.

Greece has warned it may be unable to repay an IMF loan due on June 5 unless it reaches a deal with emergency creditors to unlock remaining bailout funds. It has four IMF repayments

due next month, through June 19.

In Athens, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras held an hour-long call with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande, according to government officials who remained optimistic a deal was imminent.

"It is based on very specific facts," government spokesman Gabriel Sakellariadis said. "We are going into these negotiations with the aim to have an agreement with our partners by Sunday."

Murray refused to comment on when a deal could be struck, insisting "work still needs to be done" — a note of caution echoed in Brussels.

"Talks will continue in the coming days, and further progress is needed," European Commission spokeswoman Annika Breidhardt said. "We're not there yet. There are open issues which need to be resolved."

The commission is one of the three institutions nego-

tiating with Greece, along with the IMF and European Central Bank.

Tsipras' government, elected in January on an anti-austerity platform, has been in talks for four months on what reforms it should make to get the final bailout installment of 7.2 billion euros (\$8 billion) from fellow eurozone states and the IMF.

Creditors insist Athens must take more long-term measures to ensure its economy is reformed and doesn't slip back into the bad habits of the past, with reckless borrowing and a large and inefficient public sector.

Failure to reach an agreement could eventually cause Greece to drop out of the euro, roiling European and global markets.

Greece's conservative opposition criticized the government's handling of the negotiation.

"It is obvious that the government is at a dead-end," New Democracy party spokesman Kostas Karagounis said. □



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Russia:

Activist hospitalized with mystery illness

**DAVID M. HERSZENHORN
© 2015 New York Times**

MOSCOW - A prominent Russian political opposition activist, whose civic group this week released a film critical of an ally of President Vladimir V. Putin, has been hospitalized in Moscow after collapsing and losing consciousness on Tuesday from a mysterious illness.

The activist, Vladimir V. Kara-Murza, 33, is the federal coordinator of Open Russia, a civic organization founded by Mikhail B. Khodorkovsky, a fierce critic of Putin. His political activism immediately raised

suspensions of poisoning or other foul play, but so far there has been no confirmation of this from doctors or the Russian authorities. Kara-Murza's wife, Evegenia, said that he remained unconscious on Wednesday and was undergoing dialysis to treat acute renal failure, which doctors said was a result of "grave non-alcoholic intoxication."

Evegenia Kara-Murza, who lives with the couple's three young children in the United States, said in a telephone interview that her husband had been in good health and that his family feared that he had

been the victim of a poisoning attack and that he might still be in danger.

"In today's Russia, things can happen," she said. "And he was taken ill suddenly. He wasn't taking any medication that could have resulted in this."

Open Russia released a documentary this week accusing Ramzan A. Kadyrov, the strongman leader of Chechnya and a loyal supporter of Putin, of corruption and human rights abuses. The film is called "Family," a reference to Kadyrov's frequent description of the Russian president as a kind of surrogate father. □



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Cameron begins tour of EU states to build support for reform



British Prime Minister, David Cameron, left, gestures during a press conference with French President, Francois Hollande, at the Elysee Palace in Paris, Thursday May 28, 2015.

(AP Photo/Jacques Brinon)

**THOMAS ADAMSON
MIKE CORDER**

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — British Prime Minister David Cameron met with the leaders of the Netherlands and France on Thursday, as Cameron began a whirlwind visit to four European capitals, pressing his case that the

U.K. needs to renegotiate its relationship with the European Union.

Speaking in Paris at the Elysee Palace before a dinner, Cameron urged the bloc's 27 other members to be "flexible" and "imaginative" about the EU's future — saying that his priority is "to make it more com-

petitive and to address the concerns of the British people about our membership."

Cameron's newly-elected government plans a referendum by the end of 2017 on the question: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union?"

Cameron wants Britain to stay in the EU, if he manages to negotiate a new, looser relationship with the group.

French President Francois Hollande, meanwhile, made reference to the planned referendum, saying that "France hopes that Great Britain stays in the European Union... We think that it's in the interests of Europe and in the interests of the United Kingdom to be together. But there is always respect for the people's wishes."

Both leaders highlighted common ground such as a wish to defeat international terrorism and tackle climate change — and skirted over differences in their visions for the EU.

"So we have different pri-

orities but we share a common objective: which is to find solutions to these problems (in the EU)," Cameron said.

Earlier in the day, Cameron started his tour in the Netherlands, having lunch with Dutch counterpart Mark Rutte, a center-right leader Cameron described as a "very good friend and very strong partner in Europe." Cameron said he discussed with Rutte his reform agenda.

"The need for flexibility. The need to focus on growth and jobs. The need to make sure we complete the single market the need to make sure that, as you put it, Europe where necessary, but nation-states wherever possible," Cameron said. □

Yemen:

Airstrikes target rebels; fighting rages in east

**AHMED AL-HAJ
Associated Press**

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — Saudi-led warplanes bombed Shiite rebels in their northern Yemeni stronghold on Thursday as fighting raged in an oil-rich eastern province, security officials and tribesmen said.

As the Saudi-led campaign against the Iran-backed rebels, known as Houthis, entered its third month, Amnesty International warned that civilians were trapped in the crossfire. The Houthis and allied military units loyal to a former president

are battling forces loyal to internationally-recognized President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who fled to Saudi Arabia in March.

Warplanes fired at least 20 missiles at Houthi positions in their northern heartland of Saada and bombed Aden University in the southern port city, officials said, adding that the university is believed to be used as a Houthi hideout.


Fierce clashes between pro-government tribal fighters and Houthis were meanwhile underway in the eastern province of

Marib, home to much of Yemen's oil industry. Tribesmen said 10 civilians have been killed the past 48 hours.

The officials and the tribesmen spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief reporters.

International aid groups say Yemen's conflict has killed up to 2,000 people and wounded 8,000, while recent U.N. estimates have said that at least 1,037 civilians, including 130 women and 234 children, have been killed in the fighting. □

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Shocking ads ignite debate about abortion ban in Chile

LUIS ANDRES HENAO

Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) —

The video shows a woman climbing a stairwell, her belly visibly pregnant, as she offers suggestions: Make sure there are no security cameras. Be careful not to look down or you might regret it.

She tumbles backward as the screen goes black. "When you reach the bottom everything will be OK," she says.

The video is one of a series of mock abortion tutorials, part of a public campaign urging Chile to allow women to end pregnancies in cases of rape or medical complications. It would be a radical change for Chile, one of only six countries that prohibit all abortion, according to the New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights.

The videos are deliberately dark and disturbing, appearing to show pregnant women throwing themselves into traffic or thrusting their stomachs onto fire hydrants. Released last month, the videos organized by Miles, a non-gov-



Paola Dragnic poses for a photo as her children run on a playground in the background, in Santiago, Chile. Because she had a high-risk pregnancy due to an unviable fetus, her pregnancy was interrupted at a clinic. Her two children were born after her abortion.

(AP Photo/Luis Hidalgo)

ernmental group, aim to rally support for President Michelle Bachelet's attempt to ease the abortion ban.

"Clandestine abortions are carried out in Chile and abortions will continue with or without politicians or a law," Miles director Claudia Dides said. "What we want is for abortions to be safe."

The debate comes as Chile, one of Latin America's most

socially conservative countries, grapples with shifting views on once-taboo issues. The mostly Roman Catholic country began to allow divorce in 2004. Earlier this year, Congress recognized civil unions for gay couples and, recently, a pilot program in Santiago harvested the country's first legal medical marijuana.

The changing attitudes mark a generational shift,

as young people born after the 1973-1990 military dictatorship come of age. The trend has accelerated since a wave of student protests demanding educational reform began in 2011 and in the wake of Catholic priest sex-abuse scandals that have provoked questioning of church doctrine.

In 2013, then-President Sebastian Pinera came under fire when he praised a pregnant 11-year-old girl for her "depth and maturity" after she said in a TV interview that she wanted to keep the baby, the product of a rape by her mother's partner.

A recent discussion on abortion at Santiago's Diego Portales University drew a packed audience, with many students forced to sit on the floor.

"As a country, we are behind," said Fernanda Saavedra, a student who attended. "We need to evolve and think more about women."

Chile legalized abortion for medical reasons in 1931, some 18 years before it allowed women to vote. But

during the dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet, abortion was banned under all circumstances.

Today, women found guilty of having abortions face prison terms of up to five years.

Still, an estimated 120,000 illegal abortions are performed every year, according to the Miles group. Most women use the drug misoprostol, buying it on the black market, to end first-trimester pregnancies. Others undergo conventional abortions in secret. Those who can afford to travel seek abortions in neighboring Argentina or beyond.

Nelly Milad flew to Cuba in 2004 to end an unviable pregnancy.

"I've felt so much impotence, frustration and anger. You feel so left behind by a medical team that can't help you even when they morally want to, because they fear they'll be thrown into jail," Milad said. Andrea Quiroga, an accountant, was newly married in 2010 when she learned her 11-week-old fetus would not survive. □

US senator in Cuba says normal relations 'weeks away'

BEN FOX

Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — The historic process of restoring long-severed diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Cuba that began Dec. 17 will likely come to a successful end in a matter of weeks, a U.S. senator said during a visit to the island this week.

A 45-day period for Congress to challenge a decision by President Barack Obama to remove Cuba from a list of state sponsors of terrorism, a key obstacle to improved relations, will

expire Friday and the remaining issues will then get quickly resolved, Sen. Tom Udall told reporters in Havana.

"We are just two days away.

There has not been a vote in the Congress so that's going to stand," Udall said. "I think it will be a matter of weeks when we have restored diplomatic relations."

U.S. and Cuban officials have said the two sides are close to resolving the final issues that would allow both countries to re-open

embassies and exchange ambassadors for the first time since the U.S. severed diplomatic relations in January 1961.

Udall, a New Mexico Democrat who led a four-member Democratic congressional delegation to Cuba, said there appears to be growing momentum to removing at least elements of the U.S. trade embargo first imposed in 1960.

There is bipartisan support for separate pieces of legislation that would permanently end a ban on travel, allow trade in agricultural

goods and enable U.S. telecommunications and Internet companies to provide services and devices in Cuba, the senator said.

The delegation, which included Sen. Al Franken of Minnesota, Rep. Raul Grijalva of Arizona and Rep. John Larson of Connecticut, spoke to reporters after meeting with Cuban officials and small business owners. All four members of the delegation support lifting the trade embargo, which the Cubans say has badly damaged their economy over the past five

decades.

Obama softened aspects of the embargo and called on Congress to end it during his State of the Union address in January.

Franken said there is strong support among the U.S. public for normal relations.

"I think there is a very small minority, really, in the Senate and the Congress who have strong objections to this and I think that a majority of the American people and a majority of the Congress would be for lifting the embargo," he said. "But there is work to be done." □



The Kitchen Table by White and White Modern Cuisine: Welcome to the World of White: The Very Best of Fine Dining in Aruba

--Executive Chef Urvin from White Modern Cuisine and The Kitchen Table takes you on a culinary journey in Aruba

PALM BEACH - Chef Urvin Croes, born and raised in Aruba, graduated from culinary school and went on to gain experience in Michelin star restaurants in Europe. He returned to Aruba because he had a dream: to open Aruba's first fine dining, modern gourmet cuisine restaurant. With the opening of White Modern Cuisine in 2012, that dream came true.

The modern fine dining concept was new to Aruba, and for the first few months it was a challenging time. Thanks to Chef Urvin's unique culinary creations and his wife Mary-Anne's determination, they are now proud, but humbled, to be considered one of Aruba's top dining establishments with glowing reviews, receiving the award for #1 modern cuisine restaurant on Aruba. When approached by Blue Residences to open a culinary studio, Chef Urvin did not have to think twice. Where White Modern Cuisine is an 'a la carte' restaurant featuring modern cuisine, at The Kitchen Table by White Chef Urvin saw an opportunity to enhance the 'White Experience' with a 16-seat Kitchen Table experience, with a monthly changing, fixed menu culinary journey.

Now, international and local foodies have two options to explore the unique culinary creativity of Chef Urvin, and the reviews for the restaurants speak for



themselves:

"Review for The Kitchen Table by White: "A Michelin Star Waiting to Happen"

"Review for White Modern Cuisine: "Michelin Guide Should Give Stars to This Restaurant""Review for Chef Urvin Croes: "This Chef Will Be Famous!"

What makes Chef Urvin and his restaurants unique are the blend of modern culinary techniques for traditional Caribbean dishes that Chef Urvin created based on old family

recipes, prepared with the freshest possible ingredients and presented as exquisite, delicious works of art. Enhancing the culinary experiences with wine pairings at either restaurant or a daring 'cocktail pairing' at White Modern Cuisine, foodies will have all senses delighted.

Which restaurant to choose? Chef Urvin recommends both, with White's a-la-carte menu, professionally paired with wines or cocktails, or The Kitchen Table's eight-course culinary journey for

the true gourmands. Chef Urvin's signature style of fresh ingredients, providing a modern twist to traditional local Aruban and Ca-

ribbean favorites can be found in both restaurants. Since you're in Aruba, take the time to take a culinary journey in time, across Aruba, and enjoy the flavors of food and drinks in The Kitchen Table by White and White Modern Cuisine. White Modern Cuisine is conveniently located on the second floor of Palm Beach Plaza Mall, within walking distance of the high rise hotels.

Reservations can be made through their website <http://www.whitecuisine.com/reservation/>, by calling 586-1190 or through your hotel concierge. For more information on The Kitchen Table, please visit www.thekitchentableby-white.com, call 528-7015, or reach out to your hotel concierge. □



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RIU Participates in the Donation of a Bus Designed to Improve Mobility to Disabled Children in Aruba!

--The "Mi Por" Foundation which helps 38 Aruban children with physical disabilities has raised funds to buy an adapted bus that will help their mobility around the island.

ORANJESTAD - RIU Hotels & Resorts continues its social work in Aruba participating in the donation of an adapted bus for people with disabilities which has been delivered to the "Mi Por" Foundation, dedicated to supporting children with special needs. Richard Velasco, General Manager of the Riu Palace



tives that RIU Hotels expect to do on the island as a proof of its commitment to

Balliere, helps Aruban children with physical disabilities whose parents do not have the resources to offer them adequate therapy mainly due to the difficulties in transportation. The foundation has now 38 kids who are in need of therapy. They have found two retired specialists from Holland who are willing to donate their time to help these children. However, due to the fact that these children have special needs they cannot be transported by ordinary cars to the place where the therapy is given. Therefore the foundation had to raise money to buy a special bus (with wheel chairs) so that these deserving members of the Aruban society can be transported once or twice a week to a place where they can get the necessary therapy. Thanks to this donation by various individuals and companies in Aruba including RIU Hotels, this NGO has acquired the desired



bus which is equipped with six wheelchairs and four more seats. From now on these children with muscular deficiencies can travel comfortably to school, to therapy sessions and even to their swimming lessons. RIU Hotels & Resorts works on a daily basis to develop its business in a way that is progressively more responsible towards the environment and the community. For this purpose, the Corporate Social Responsibility team has an ambitious Ac-

tion Plan which focuses on three main areas: environment, society and human resources. Our plan outlines the commitments and objectives that RIU has set in each of these fields, as well as its achievements. Photos feature representatives of the Foundation "Mi Por", Esmeralda Ophelia Schotma and Joasy van der Biest; Richard Velasco, General Manager at the Riu Palace Antillas and Garage Cordia's representative, Vanesa Hollander. □



Antillas, on behalf of RIU Hotels presented the check to Joasy van der Biest a Board Member of the "Mi Por" Foundation who was delighted by RIU's generous gesture. For his part, Richard Velasco added that this is "one of many initia-

the locals on a social and environmental level, not only as a company but also as a personal gesture from the RIU family and their employees." The "Mi Por" Foundation created in 2009 in Aruba by the restaurateur Peter



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Fred Noemer Honored as Emerald Ambassador to Aruba!



EAGLE BEACH - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a very nice and beloved gentleman in Aruba, who is a loyal and friendly Visitor of Aruba, as

an Emerald Ambassador at the Paradise Beach Villas. The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for

35-or-more consecutive years. The honoree was Mr. Fred Noemer from Sarasota, Florida. Fred is visiting Aruba for 37 consecutive years, and he is a loyal member



of the Paradise Beach Villas and also he is a board member of the Resort. He started visiting Aruba in the late '70's, buying 20 weeks when Aruba Beach Club just started and later on more weeks at Casa del Mar, Harbourtown, and Paradise Beach Villas when it was still a piece of sand. That's when he joined the Board of Directors. He was just voted in again for another five years, with

three meetings every year. Fred loves Aruba very much because of the friendly people, the safety, the weather, the beaches and the restaurants, and because staying at the Paradise is like being home for him. The certificates were presented by Mr. Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with Mrs. Jealda Damian representing the Paradise Beach Villas. □

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During the whole month of June, they will offer this 6-course dinner with a weekly changing menu. Six years ago Mise en Place opened their fine dining restaurant Papillon located on the Irausquin Blvd 348. Papillon Restaurant's menu reflects the Frenchman's arduous journey to freedom: classic French dishes have been dusted with daring Caribbean flair and are a culinary journey for your taste buds. Let Papillon surprise you this June! Reservations are preferred: reservations@papillonaruba.com, or call: 586-5400. qwww.papillonaruba.com





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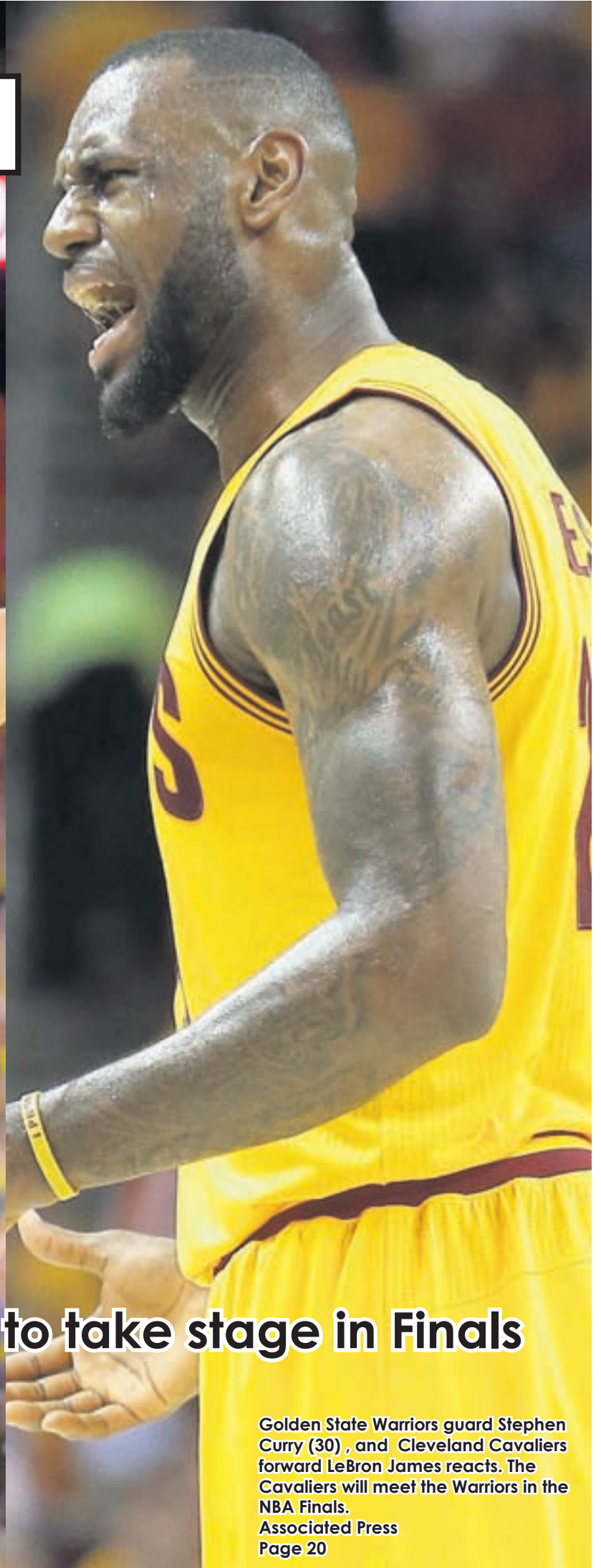
Rory McIlroy reacts after missing a putt on hole 18 during round one of the Irish Open Golf Championship at Royal County Down, Newcastle, Northern Ireland, Thursday, May 28, 2015.
Associated Press

Rory blown away on home turf, risks early exit at Irish Open

SHAWN POGATCHNIK
Associated Press
NEWCASTLE, Northern Ireland (AP) — Rory McIlroy can't seem to perform in front of a home crowd. The Northern Ireland star looked bewildered as he shot a 9-over-par 80 — his worst score of the season — in Thursday's opening round of the Irish Open. He fell to the bottom of the morning's leaderboard and finished tied for 150th place at the end of the day. Many other players struggled amid gales and pounding showers at Royal County Down, a links course in the shadow of the Mourne Mountains famed for its stunning seaside setting, blind approaches and undulating greens. But the scores improved as the winds eased somewhat and the afternoon sun came out. Taking advantage were Irish veteran Padraig Harrington and unheralded Maximilian Kieffer of Germany, who both shot 67 to share the lead.

Continued on next page

COLLISION COURSE



James, Curry set to take stage in Finals

Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30), and Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James reacts. The Cavaliers will meet the Warriors in the NBA Finals.
Associated Press
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Bowditch shoots 62, leaving Spieth 7 shots back at Nelson

SCHUYLER DIXON

AP Sports Writer

IRVING, Texas (AP) — Steven Bowditch considers the AT&T Byron Nelson his home tournament — just maybe not to the extent Jordan Spieth does.

The Australian matched his low round on the PGA Tour with an 8-under 62 on Thursday to take a two-shot lead over another Texan, Jimmy Walker. Spieth was seven shots back in his first round as Masters champion in the event that gave the Dallas player his start as a 16-year-old amateur in 2010.

Bowditch, who moved to the Dallas area 10 years ago, has made the cut just once at the Nelson — in his debut in 2011, when he tied for 60th after a third-round 80. He didn't make it to the weekend each of the past three years at TPC Four Seasons.

The 31-year-old missed the cut last week at Colonial in Fort Worth, which is a little farther from his home in the suburb of Flower Mound and he says doesn't have quite the "hometown" draw as the Nelson for Bowditch's family and



Steven Bowditch watches his tee shot on the 17th hole during the first round of the Byron Nelson golf tournament, Thursday, May 28, 2015, in Irving, Texas.

Associated Press

friends.

"It's starting to feel that way, to be honest. Starting to get a lot more ticket requests," said Bowditch, whose only PGA Tour win was the 2014 Texas Open in San Antonio. "You always want to play well, but I guess it is a little more special when you have everyone around that only get to see you play golf once a year."

The Nelson had the hometown feel for Spieth the moment he stepped to the

10th tee as a high school junior five years ago, when he tied for 16th as the sixth-youngest player to make the cut in a PGA Tour event. He returned as a rising star after his win at Augusta, frequently tipping his cap to large galleries that even cheered as he walked onto greens.

"It feels different when I tee off now versus when I was out there then," said Spieth, who has finished second at all three Texas events this year, including Colonial.

"Obviously, off the course I prepare hard for this and would like to play well and get in contention. But when I'm inside the ropes, it's just another week. Back then, it was the biggest tournament I've ever played in." James Hahn and Dallas resident Ryan Palmer shared third at 65, and 2011 Nelson champion Keegan Bradley was in the group 66. Danny Lee aced the par-3 17th with a 5-iron from 190 yards and was tied for ninth at 67. Defending champion Bren-

don Todd, playing a group ahead of Spieth, had just one birdie and shot 72.

Despite an opening birdie, the 21-year-old Spieth couldn't get the warm greetings to escalate on a mostly sunny but soggy course that has absorbed about a foot of rain in less than three weeks. Players were allowed to lift, clean and place their golf balls in the fairways.

Spieth didn't give himself many good chances for birdie, and let a couple get away in the last three holes by missing short putts while playing with Justin Thomas, his friend and opponent in the 2012 NCAA team final when Spieth led Texas over Alabama. Thomas opened with an even-par 70.

A grim-faced Spieth tossed his putter toward his bag after not even catching the lip from 8 feet on 16, but was generally upbeat after the round.

"I just didn't give myself enough looks inside of 15 feet today," said Spieth, who won the Valspar Championship about a month before the Masters. "That's the only reason I'm at 1 (under) and not better. I felt comfortable driving the ball and striking it." Bowditch made three putts of 24 feet or longer while shooting a 30 on the front nine and had the last of eight birdies in a bogey-free round with a 6-foot putt after a long bunker shot at the par-5 16th. His previous best round at the Nelson was a second-round 65 that helped him make his only cut four years ago.

"Probably my best putting in the way of longer putts made," said Bowditch, whose other 62 was in the final round of the 2011 Viking Classic in Mississippi. "I typically don't make a lot of longer putts." □

Irish Open

Continued from page 17

The 43-year-old Harrington, who hasn't won on the European Tour since 2008 but took the PGA Tour's Honda Classic in March, said understanding the strong winds gave him a tactical advantage. He birdied five of the final eight, but edged an 8-foot putt for birdie just wide on the final hole. Had he made it, Harrington would have tied the 76-year-old course record.

"There's plenty of ways to get around this golf course in the wind. I was happy

to see it," said Harrington, who won the Irish Open in 2007.

The 290th-ranked Kieffer, 24, was in the last group to start and not expected to contend. But he eagled the par-5, 525-yard 12th hole on his way to one of his best rounds since finishing second in the 2013 Spanish Open.

McIlroy bogeyed half of the course and couldn't hit a birdie. The sellout crowd of nearly 20,000 gasped with each miss, and offered relieved applause as he narrowly two-putted his final hole for par.

"My poor iron play led to

missed greens, which led to giving myself a lot of 8- to 12-footers for pars, and that led to missing all of them," said McIlroy, who described his play as "worse as I got closer to the green."

He had played three practice rounds at the course south of Belfast after failing to make the cut at Wentworth last weekend, but the unexpected extra practice didn't help his play.

If McIlroy fails to make the cut Friday, it would be his third straight early exit at the Irish Open. He's never come close to winning the event in eight tries.

McIlroy, whose Rory Foun-

dation children's charity is hosting the Irish Open for the first time, said he might need to shoot a 66 on Friday to make the cut. That would match the course record set by Jimmy Brien in 1939.

McIlroy said his first goal is to give Northern Ireland fans "something to cheer about and not just have sympathy claps."

Local fan favorite Darren Clarke, who has rarely contended since winning the 2011 British Open, also struggled in shooting a 75. "We all want to play well," he said, "but sometimes the ball doesn't realize that." □



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Chicago Bulls fire coach Tom Thibodeau after 5 seasons

ANDREW SELIGMAN

AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — The Chicago Bulls fired Tom Thibodeau on Thursday, saying a change was needed from the strong-willed coach who took his team to the playoffs in each of his five seasons.

Thibodeau went 255-139 with the Bulls, good for a .647 winning percentage that ranks seventh in NBA history among coaches with at least 200 games. He led the Bulls to the top seed in the playoffs his first two seasons and was the NBA's Coach of the Year in 2011 — the same year Derrick Rose became the league's youngest MVP.

Chicago advanced to the Eastern Conference finals that season, but it's the only time the Bulls have made it past the second round under Thibodeau, whose relationship with the front office was under constant scrutiny. "When Tom was hired in

2010, he was right for our team and system at that time, and over the last five years we have had some success with Tom as our head coach," general manager Gar Forman said. "But as we looked ahead and evaluated how we as a team and an organization could continue to grow and improve, we believed a change in approach was needed."

Bulls Chairman Jerry Reinsdorf was blunt:

"Teams that consistently perform at the highest levels are able to come together and be unified across the organization—staff, players, coaches, management and ownership," he said. "When everyone is on the same page, trust develops and teams can grow and succeed together. Unfortunately, there has been a departure from this culture." The coach chafed at minutes restrictions placed by management on Rose and

Joakim Noah, who was coming off knee surgery, along with veteran Kirk Hinrich.

The idea was that the Bulls would be in better shape for the playoffs and not run out of steam the way they seemed to the previous two years. But it also went against Thibodeau's belief that good habits are developed through repetition.

Adding to the tension, ESPN analyst Jeff Van Gundy accused the Bulls of undermining their coach during a game at Dallas in January. It wasn't the first time he had criticized the organization. But to many, whether it was true or not, it seemed he was serving as a messenger for Thibodeau, his former assistant.

Thibodeau is not the first successful Bulls coach to lose in a clash with management. Phil Jackson lost to Jerry Krause after winning six championships in eight years, and the dynasty was



In this May 10, 2015, file photo, Chicago Bulls head coach Tom Thibodeau yells to his team during the first half of Game 4 in a second-round NBA basketball playoff series against the Cleveland Cavaliers in Chicago.

Associated Press

dismantled.

The Bulls were expected to make a run to the NBA Finals this season with the signing of Pau Gasol and the return of Rose after missing most of the previous two years because of injuries to each knee. Instead, Rose was inconsistent. The Bulls fought through injuries and lacked

continuity. Their effort wavered at times, and they wound up with 50 wins — not bad, but not what they anticipated.

"I think this team has more potential," Gasol said after the season.

The question is who will be coaching them for the next run. □

Curry wants what LeBron has in Warriors-Cavaliers NBA Finals

BRIAN MAHONEY
AP Basketball Writer

Stephen Curry and LeBron James, this season's brightest stars, are taking basketball's biggest stage. The NBA Finals start June 4 with the Golden State Warriors against the Cleveland Cavaliers, two teams who have little experience playing this time of year. James is the exception, getting ready to appear in his fifth straight finals. He won two titles in Miami before coming back home to Ohio. Curry is aiming for what the four-time MVP has experienced.

"He's been here plenty of times before, five straight finals appearances, I think, so we've got to bring our A game if we're going to beat a great team and a great player like that four times," Curry said. "We're excited about the challenge. He had to win his first one at some point, and nobody on our team has experienced that, so we're going to be fighting like crazy every night." Not for a while, though. Both teams were so good in the conference finals that they won too fast, the Cavaliers finishing a sweep of top-seeded Atlanta in the East on Tuesday and the Warriors completing their five-game victory over Houston a night later. The lengthy layoff will benefit banged-up players on both teams, and provide plenty of time to hype the



Golden State Warriors players celebrate after Game 5 of the NBA basketball Western Conference finals against the Houston Rockets in Oakland, Calif., Wednesday, May 27, 2015. The Warriors won 104-90 and advanced to the NBA Finals.

Associated Press

Curry-James duel. They started in the same place, born in the same hospital in Akron, Ohio, but couldn't have been more different upon arriving in the NBA. James was the can't-miss Chosen One taken with the top pick in the 2003 draft, a perfect 6-foot-8 combination of size and speed. Curry had the sweet shot but a small stature, considered by many not big enough for NBA superstardom when he was drafted out of Davidson in 2009. Yet he put together a highlight reel this season with his brilliant ballhandling and smooth stroke and was voted MVP, finishing two



Cleveland Cavaliers' Shawn Marion holds up the NBA basketball Eastern Conference championship trophy after the Cavaliers defeated the Atlanta Hawks 118-88 in Game 4 of the series, Tuesday, May 26, 2015, in Cleveland.

Associated Press

changes throughout the course of the season, that's faced so many obstacles throughout the season — injuries here, transactions here, lineups here — it's something we can be very proud of to this point," James said.

This will be his second crack at trying to help the Cavs win their first title. They got there in 2007 but were swept by San Antonio. The Warriors are seeking their first championship since 1975.

Here are some things to watch in the finals:

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK: The Warriors' Steve Kerr and the Cavaliers' David Blatt — who nearly signed on to work under Kerr before getting the Cleveland job — are the first rookie coaches in the finals since the league's first championship.

NO PLACE LIKE HOME: Golden State is 46-3 at Oracle Arena this season. The Cavaliers have become just as unbeatable on their home floor, winning 26 of their last 28 games at Quicken Loans Arena, including 18 by double digits. **SORE STARS:** Kyrie Irving has been MVP of the All-Star Game and the Basketball World Cup — where he started in the U.S. backcourt alongside Curry. Now he gets his chance in the NBA Finals, with plenty of time to rest the knee and foot injuries that caused him to miss two games in the conference finals. The time off will benefit fellow All-Star and world champion Klay Thompson. He began experiencing concussion symptoms after being kneed in the head and bleeding from the ear in the series clincher against Houston. He'll need to pass the league's concussion protocol before returning to action.

CONTAINING THE KING: Kawhi Leonard turned in a solid defensive effort against James last year when San Antonio beat Miami. Among the options for the Warriors against James is Draymond Green, the runner-up to Leonard this season for Defensive Player of the Year. □

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spots ahead of James. Curry averaged 31.2 points and shot nearly 50 percent from 3-point range in the West finals, while James nearly averaged a triple-double in the Cavs' four-game romp. The Warriors have home-court advantage after winning a league-best 67 games. But the Cavaliers, despite a difficult start to the season and the loss of Kevin Love, have been even better in the postseason, with a 12-2 record. "No matter what happens from here on out, to see what we've accomplished being a first-year team together that's had different

Blackhawks beat Ducks 5-2 to force Game 7 in West finals



Chicago Blackhawks left wing Brandon Saad celebrates his goal against Anaheim Ducks goalie Frederik Andersen with Jonathan Toews (19) during the second period in Game 6 of the Western Conference finals of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Playoffs, Wednesday, May 27, 2015, in Chicago. Associated Press

JAY COHEN

AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Chicago's Duncan Keith had three assists and saved a goal in the third period, as the Blackhawks beat Anaheim 5-2 on Wednesday to force a Game 7 in the NHL Western Conference finals. The Blackhawks' biggest stars stepped up during a key stretch in the second period, led by another terrific all-around performance for Keith. Shaking off the Ducks' plan to wear down Chicago's top four defensemen, Keith had his fourth multipoint game of the playoffs.

"He's kind of a freak as far as his metabolism and conditioning level," coach Joel Quenneville said. "The more he plays, the more efficient, the more he gets going."

Andrew Shaw had two goals late in the third, sending the Ducks to their first regulation loss of the playoffs. Brandon Saad, Marian Hossa and Patrick Kane also scored for Chicago, and Corey Crawford made 30 saves.

Next up for the NHL playoffs is a double dip of Game 7s to determine which teams will play for the Stanley Cup. The New York Rangers

host the Tampa Bay Lightning in the Eastern Conference decider Friday, and the Blackhawks and Ducks meet in Anaheim on Saturday.

It is only the second time in the expansion era since the 1967-68 playoffs that each of the conference finals required a Game 7.

"One group is going to go home and one group's going to go play for the Stanley Cup," Anaheim coach Bruce Boudreau said. "There's really not a lot you can leave on the table."

The Ducks and Blackhawks were both eliminated from last season's playoffs in Game 7s, and both at the hands of Los Angeles.

"I remember the feeling after we lost that game," Kane said. "We definitely don't want that feeling again."

Patrick Maroon and Clayton Stoner scored for the Ducks, and Frederik Andersen made 18 saves.

Anaheim got a lucky call when Jakob Silfverberg brushed up against Crawford's glove on Stoner's first goal of the playoffs at 1:57 of the third, trimming Chicago's lead to 3-2. There was no call on the play and Crawford threw up his hands in exasperation.

But Crawford quickly put the play behind him, defying the Ducks as they made a frantic push for the tying goal. He got some help from Keith, who swept a shot away from the goal line about 3 1/2 minutes into the period.

"It's unbelievable," Shaw said. "He's one of those athletes who digs down and finds that extra step." Shaw finally gave the Blackhawks some breathing room when he beat Andersen with a nifty backhand high into the net with 3:32 left. Andrew Desjardins made a nice hustle play to get the puck over to Shaw for his third playoff goal.

Shaw then added an empty-netter in the final minute as Chicago improved to 7-1 at home in the playoffs. "We chased the game a little bit tonight and we let them dictate the second period," Ducks center Ryan Kesler said. "They scored three quick ones. It's tough to come back from three goals. We gave it a shot there."

The Blackhawks opened the scoring in the second period when Keith made a long pass ahead to Kane, who touched it to a streaking Saad.

The team with the first goal has won each of the first six games of the series.

Keith connected with Hossa for a score at 10:41, patiently waiting while the winger got open for the other side of the net. He then got his 14th assist of the playoffs when Kane made a dazzling move to get past Matt Beleskey and squeeze a shot past Ander-

sen with 7:52 left in the second.

Keith played 28 1/2 minutes. He leads the NHL in ice time for the playoffs.

"I've always taken pride in working out and training," he said. "When I was younger, I was never a big guy, I'm still not the biggest guy. It's a way to try and maybe even the playing field in some ways."

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MON-FRI 6:55
SAT, SUN & HOL 1:50 | 6:55

PITCH PERFECT 2
MON-THURS 4:15 | 6:45 | 9:15
FRI 4:15 | 6:45 | 9:15 | 11:30
SAT 1:50 | 4:15 | 6:45 | 9:15 | 11:30
SUN & HOL 1:50 | 4:15 | 6:45 | 9:15

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New French Open challenges await Williams, Djokovic, Murray

HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

PARIS (AP) — For Serena Williams, it was a bad right elbow that led to some shaky serving and a dropped set.

For Novak Djokovic, first it was a balky right hip that needed treatment from a trainer; later came an embarrassing mistake.

For Andy Murray, it was a time warning from the chair umpire and losing a set for the first time in six matches against his opponent.

While nine-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal won in straight sets on a cloudy, windy Thursday, some red dirt got in the machine for three of the other biggest names at Roland Garros. That trio put those moments aside and reached the third round, where more significant challenges could await.

"I know I'm capable of playing great tennis," the top-seeded Williams said. "Just haven't seen it yet." Calling her performance "not professional," Williams was sloppy as can be for stretches in a 5-7, 6-3, 6-3 victory over 105th-ranked Anna-Lena Friedsam, a German who had never won a Grand Slam match until this week.

Williams committed 21 unforced errors in the first set



Serbia's Novak Djokovic is treated for an injury in the second round match of the French Open tennis tournament against Luxembourg's Gilles Muller at the Roland Garros stadium, in Paris, France, Thursday, May 28, 2015.

Associated Press

alone, 52 in all.

"I was a little bit nervous (in the) first set," Friedsam said, "and I think Serena was a bit nervous, too."

The American was particularly subpar with her serve, which she said she hasn't been able to work on properly in practice because of an elbow injury that led her to withdraw from a clay-court tournament in Rome this month.

"I'm not using it so much as a weapon," Williams said about her serve. "So hopefully it will get better."

She double-faulted eight times and allowed Friedsam to accumulate 15 break points, four of which were converted.

"I know my level is literally 100 times better than I played today," the 19-time major champion said, rolling her eyes, "so I think I take more solace in the fact I can play better, as opposed to the fact that that's the best I could play. Then I would be in trouble." Next comes 27th-seeded Victoria Azarenka, a former No. 1 player and

two-time Australian Open champion.

Even if she is 15-3 against Azarenka, including wins in the 2012 and 2013 U.S. Open finals, Williams acknowledged: "I do know if I play the way I did today, I probably won't be winning my match. So I'm going to have to step it up a level." The top-seeded Djokovic and Murray, seeded No. 3, both will take on talented young Australians for berths in the fourth round. Djokovic faces 19-year-old Thanasi Kokkinakis, while

Murray meets 20-year-old Nick Kyrgios. There hadn't been a teenager in the men's third round at Roland Garros since 2008, but now there are two: Kokkinakis and Croatia's Borna Coric, 18.

Coric eliminated 33-year-old Tommy Robredo, who was seeded 18th, 7-5, 3-6, 6-2, 4-6, 6-4, and now will meet Jack Sock, a 22-year-old American.

"All of them — Kyrgios, Kokkinakis and Coric — are showing some great skills and potential to be ... top players," Djokovic said. "But it's a long way ahead."

Djokovic proclaimed the pain in his upper right leg "nothing serious, really" after taking a medical timeout late in the second set of his 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 win over Gilles Muller. For a few minutes, things did not look promising for Djokovic — prone on the court, getting massaged by a trainer.

But he eventually moved a step closer to completing a career Grand Slam. There was a gaffe at 4-1 in the third set, though, when Djokovic casually watched a ball by Muller sail long but touch the edge of his racket before hitting the court.

The point went to Muller, who broke there. □



Ryder Hesjedal of Canada, right, crosses the finish line ahead of the overall leader Alberto Contador, left, at the end of the 18th stage of the Giro d'Italia, Tour of Italy cycling race from Melide, Switzerland, to Verbania, Italy, Thursday, May 28, 2015.

Associated Press

VERBANIA, Italy (AP) — Alberto Contador increased his lead on the 18th stage of the Giro d'Italia on Thursday with a well-timed

attack on the leg's big climb, while former world champion Philippe Gilbert posted his second victory in this year's race.

Contador extends lead; Gilbert wins 18th stage of Giro d'Italia

A member of an early breakaway, Gilbert required just over four hours to complete the 170-kilometer (106-mile) leg from Melide, Switzerland, to Verbania, which included one top-category climb shortly before the finish. Astana riders Mikel Landa and Fabio Aru fell behind due to a crash before the climb to Monte Ologno, and that's when Contador attacked, riding by himself for most of the ascent and opening up a significant gap from the other contenders. Contador extended his lead over Landa to 5 min-

utes, 15 seconds, with Aru third, 6:05 behind.

"I've been working to win this race for four months and every day I'm getting closer," Contador said. Stage 19 and 20 are both grueling mountain legs, before Sunday's finish in Milan.

Contador is attempting to become the first rider since Marco Pantani in 1998 to win the Giro and Tour de France in the same year.

A two-time Tour champion, Contador won the Giro in 2008 and was also triumphant in Milan in 2011 but was stripped of that

title for testing positive in the 2010 Tour.

Gilbert won the world title in 2012 and also has titles in many single-day classics. The Belgian rider also won Stage 12.

Two other members of the breakaway, Francesco Bongiorno and Sylvain Chavanel, finished second and third, 47 seconds and 1:01 behind Gilbert, respectively.

Contador finished 6:05 behind while Landa and Aru were 7:18 back.

Damiano Cunego, the 2004 winner, fell and withdrew early on while with the breakaway. □

Google unveils Android's latest technological tricks

MICHAEL LIEDTKE

AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

Google's next version of its Android operating system will boast new ways to fetch information, pay merchants and protect privacy on mobile devices as the Internet company duels with Apple in the quest to make their technology indispensable.

The upgrade will give Android's personal assistant, Google Now, expanded powers of intuition that may be greeted as a great convenience to some and a tad too creepy for others.

Most of the renovations unveiled Thursday at Google's annual developers' conference won't be available until late summer or early fall, around the same time that Apple is expected to release the latest overhaul of the iOS software that powers the iPhone and iPad.

The annual changes to Android and iOS are becoming increasingly important as people become more dependent on smartphones to manage their lives. Android holds about an 80 percent share of the worldwide smartphone market, with iOS a distant second at 16 percent, according to the research firm International Data Corp.

Both Google and Apple are vying to make their products even more ubiquitous by transplanting



David Singleton, director at Android Wear, speaks during the Google I/O 2015 keynote presentation in San Francisco, Thursday, May 28, 2015.

much of their mobile technology into automobiles and Internet-connected televisions and appliances. Google hopes to play a prominent role in the management of home security and appliances with a new operating system called Brillo that will interact with Android devices.

Here's a closer look at some of the key features in the upcoming Android upgrade, currently known simply as "M":

NOW ON TAP

Google Now currently learns a user's interests and habits by analyzing search requests and scanning emails so it can automatically present helpful infor-

mation, such as the latest news about a favorite sports team or how long it will take to get to work.

With the M upgrade, users will be able to summon Google Now to scan whatever content might be on a mobile device's screen so it can present pertinent information about the topic of a text, a song, a video clip or an article.

The new Android feature, called "Now on Tap," will be activated by holding down the device's home button or speaking, "OK Google," into the microphone. That action will prompt Now on Tap to scan the screen in attempt to figure out how to be the most helpful. Or, if speaking, users can just

say what they are seeking, such as "Who sings this?" Google is hoping to provide Android users with what they need at the precise moment they need it without forcing them to hopscotch from one app to another.

MOBILE PAYMENT DO-

OVER

Android M will include an alternative to the mobile payment system that Apple introduced last fall. Google's response, called Android Pay, will replace Google Wallet for making mobile purchases in stores and applications. Google Wallet, which came out in 2011, will still work for sending payments from one person to another.

Like Apple's system, Android Pay can be used to store major credit and debit cards in smartphones that can be used to pay merchants equipped with terminals that work with the technology. Android Pay will also work on devices running on the KitKat version of Android released last year.

PROTECTING PRIVACY

Android M will be compatible with fingerprint scanners so device users can verify their identities by pressing a button instead of entering a passcode. Apple's iPhones began using a fingerprint reader in 2013. □

Associated Press

Tech blog spinoff Re/code is acquired by online media chain

The Associated Press

Tech news blog Re/code said Tuesday it's been acquired by online publishing company Vox Media, just 18 months after spinning off from its former parent, The Wall Street Journal.

Vox operates several news and entertainment sites, including The Verge, which also covers tech news. In an online statement, Re/code founders Kara Swisher and Walt Mossberg said they will continue to operate their site separately but may occasionally collaborate with The Verge.

Re/code has focused on tech companies and business news, while The Verge reports from a culture and lifestyle perspective. Terms of the acquisition were not disclosed. Swisher and

Mossberg started their blog at The Wall Street Journal, which is owned by News Corp., where it was known as AllThingsD. Since the spinoff, Re/code has continued to stage successful industry conferences and earned a reputation for breaking exclusive stories. But its readership has lagged. Re/code had 1.5 million unique visitors in April, compared with 12 million for the Verge and 53 million for all Vox sites combined, according to the comScore research service. Another tech news site, GigaOm, shut down earlier this year. A number of other news sites continue to cover the tech industry in New York and Silicon Valley, and some have added staff in recent months. □

FCC head unveils proposal to narrow 'digital divide'

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) —

The head of the Federal Communications Commission is proposing that the government agency expand a phone subsidy program for the poor to include Internet access. The FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler, has emphasized that Internet access is a critical component of modern life, key education, communication and finding a keeping a job.

With the net neutrality rules released earlier this year, the agency redefined broadband as a public utility, like the telephone, giving it stricter oversight on how online content gets to consumers. That triggered lawsuits from Internet service providers.

The proposal Thursday to expand the Lifeline phone program to Internet service aims to narrow the "digital divide" — those with ac-

cess to the Internet and other modern technologies and those without.

According to a Pew Research Center report from 2013, 70 percent of U.S. adults have a high-speed Internet connection at home. Only 54 percent of households earnings less than \$30,000 a year do. The FCC says low-income Americans are more likely to rely on smartphones for Internet access. □

Avago looks to grow with \$37B deal for chipmaker Broadcom

BREE FOWLER

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Avago Technologies is buying rival chipmaker Broadcom in a cash and stock deal worth about \$37 billion, vastly expanding its lineup of products for the rapidly growing wireless device market at a time when sales growth has otherwise been tough

to come by for smaller chipmakers.

Hock Tan, Avago's president and chief executive, says that the deal will make his company the third largest semiconductor maker in terms of revenue and give it the most diversified communications platform in the industry, adding that there is very little over-

lap between Avago and Broadcom's products.

Tan said that the proliferation of high-speed data services for wireless devices around the world has resulted in a jump in chip content per wireless device, as well as a surge in the amount of data traffic running through data centers.

"We believe we are in the beginning stages of enhanced networking in the home as people use their wireless devices to connect to various entertainment, security and comfort functions that are all driven by pervasive broadband access," Tan said Thursday. "This acquisition will allow us to access this trend

more deeply."

The combined company will be worth \$77 billion and is expected to post annual revenue of \$15 billion. The acquisition also is expected to immediately boost Avago's adjusted profits and save it \$750 million in costs on an annual run rate basis 18 months after the deal closes. □

Wall Street treads lightly awaiting Greece debt deadline



Trader Ryan Falvey, right, works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. U.S. stocks fell slightly Thursday, following a sell-off in the Chinese market and continued worries about the approaching debt payment deadline for cash-starved Greece. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

KEN SWEET

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks fell slightly Thursday, following a sell-off in the Chinese market and continued worries about the approaching debt payment deadline for cash-starved Greece.

The overall market was quiet, with the Dow mov-

ing less than 100 points throughout the session. Energy and industrial stocks were among the biggest decliners. Most investors are in "wait and see" mode regarding Greece and the Federal Reserve, which is weighing when to begin raising interest rates. The Dow Jones industrial average slipped 36.87

points, or 0.2 percent, to 18,126.12. The Standard & Poor's 500 index edged down 2.69 points, or 0.1 percent, to 2,120.79 and the Nasdaq composite lost 8.62 points, or 0.2 percent, to 5,097.98.

In corporate news, chipmakers Avago Technologies and Broadcom agreed to merge in a \$37

billion deal. Avago rose 89 cents, or 1 percent, to \$142.38. Broadcom fell 91 cents, or 2 percent, to \$56.25. Both stocks had jumped sharply Wednesday — Broadcom by 22 percent and Avago by 8 percent — on rumors those companies were in talks.

In Greece, progress in talks between that country and its creditors is unclear. Greece said it expected to reach a deal to get more bailout loans in time to make a key debt payment on June 5. Its creditors were quick to temper expectations.

Greece said it aims to clinch a deal by Sunday, which would allow it to receive the much needed final installment of its international bailout and avoid a default.

Greece has given investors a headache for years now, and many are skeptical that this round of talks will resolve any of the country's debt issues.

"They're likely to kick the can down the road as they have been," said Scott Wren, a market strategist with Wells Fargo. "At this

point, I think we're likely looking at Greece leaving the eurozone."

In European markets, Greek stocks fell 1.7 percent. Germany's DAX lost 0.8 percent, France's CAC-40 lost 0.9 percent and the U.K.'s FTSE 100 index rose 0.1 percent.

Along with Greece's debt problems, investors are looking for insight into when the Fed might start raising interest rates. The central bank is expected to increase rates as early as September, but the bank's policymakers say any increase will depend on how the U.S. economy is doing.

Investors were also unnerved but a sell-off in Asia. China's Shanghai Composite sank 6.5 percent. Stock market commentator Hexun attributed the fall to several factors, including brokerages tightening lending to individual investors, selling by speculators and a Chinese sovereign wealth fund selling shares in two state banks.

Despite an economic slowdown in China, the index has gained 40 percent in

Etihad Airways profit jumps by over half to \$73 million

ADAM SCHRECK

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Etihad Airways,

the United Arab Emirates' fast-growing national carrier, said Thursday its profit rose by more than half to \$73 million last year but warned that "aggressive protectionist sentiment" in the West threatens its future prospects. The government-backed airline, which has

bought up stakes in several foreign carriers that help drive traffic through its Abu Dhabi hub, said its earnings rose 52 percent over the \$48 million its stand-alone airline business earned the previous year. It was the airline's fourth year of profitability. Etihad and rivals Qatar Airways and Dubai-based Emirates are rapidly expanding, funneling mainly long-haul passengers and

cargo through their growing Gulf hubs. U.S. airlines have criticized the carriers, saying they are distorting the market by benefiting from unfair state subsidies — a charge the Gulf airlines deny.

President and CEO James Hogan cited that opposition as an "unprecedented" challenge.

"Of particular concern has been the rise in aggressive protectionist sentiment

in Europe and the U.S.," he said. "These attempts to limit competition are detrimental to consumer choice. They threaten to damage the significant progress that our airline has made in offering improved travel connections, product and service standards and value for money."

Etihad's revenue for the year increased to \$7.6 billion from \$6 billion in 2013.

That increase was helped by a 22-percent jump in passenger numbers to 14.8 million as the airline continued to add capacity with the addition of new planes. The carrier also grew its route network in 2014, launching services to 10 new destinations, including tourist hotspots like Rome and Phuket, Thailand, as well as Los Angeles, Dallas and San Francisco. □

Talent Loves English



DAVID BROOKS
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Eight hundred years ago next month, English noblemen forced King John to sign the Magna Carta. It's still having amazing effects on the world today. The Magna Carta helped usher in government with a separation of powers. It helped create conditions in which centralized authority could not totally control fiscal, political, religious or intellectual life. It helped usher in the modern Anglo-Saxon state model, with its relative emphasis on the open movement of people, ideas and things.

The Anglo-Saxon model has its plusses and minuses, but it is very attractive to people around the world. Today, as always, immigrants flock to nations with British political heritage. Forty-six million people in the United States are foreign born, almost 1 in 6. That's by far the highest number of immigrants in any country.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand are also immigrant magnets. The British political class was a set abuzz last week by a government report showing a 50 percent increase in net immigration in 2014 compared with 2013. The government has a goal of limiting immigration to 100,000 a year, but, in 2014, net inbound migration was estimated to be 318,000. Britain has the most diverse immigrant community of any nation on earth.

Some of the those people went to Britain from outside of Europe, but a great many flow from the sclerotic economies in the European Union: Italy, Spain and France. Compared with many other European countries, Britain is a job-creating paragon.

Across the English-speaking world, immigrants are drawn by the same things: relatively strong economies, good universities, open cultures and the world's lingua franca.

The nature of global migration is slowly evolving, too. We have an image of immigrants as the poor, huddled masses yearning to breathe free. According to this stereotype, immigrants are driven from their homes by poverty and move elsewhere to compete against the lowest-skilled workers.

But immigrants do not come from the poorest countries. Nations like Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo

and Niger - some of the poorest countries in the world - have some of the lowest outmigration rates. Less than 3 percent of their populations live outside their borders. Their citizens don't have the resources to move.

Instead, immigrants tend to come from middle-class countries, and they migrate to rich, open ones. You might have thought that as the world gets more middle class, global immigration would decline because of more opportunity at home. In fact, the reverse is happening. As the developing world gets more middle class, immigration has increased because educational and income gains have led to ever higher aspirations.

The situation is complex. Less than a decade ago, six Mexicans migrated to the United States for every Indian or Chinese. But as Mexico has prospered, immigration has dropped. Meanwhile, as India and China have gotten richer, the number of Indians and Chinese living abroad has doubled.

Some of the Asian immigrants are quite wealthy. According to the China International Immigration Report, among Chinese with assets of more than \$16 million, 27 percent had emigrated abroad and an additional 47 percent were considering such a move. The real estate website Soufun.net surveyed 5,000 people and found that 41 percent of such people were drawn to move abroad for better living conditions, 35 percent for better educational opportunities for their children and 15 percent for better retirement conditions.

And this talent pool has barely been tapped. According to a Gallup survey in 2012, 22 million Chinese wanted to move to the United States, as did 10 million Indians, 3 million Vietnamese and a surprising 5 million Japanese.

In short, it might be time to revise our stereotypes about the immigration issue. A thousand years ago, a few English noblemen unwittingly heralded in a decentralized political and intellectual model. This model was deepened over the centuries by people ranging from Henry VIII to the American founding fathers. It's a model that is relatively friendly to outsider talent. We didn't earn this model; we're the lucky inheritors.

Meanwhile, globalization, with all its stresses and strains, has created a large international class of middle-class dreamers: university graduates who can't fulfill their aspirations at home and who would enrich whatever nation is lucky enough to have them.

In this context, Hillary Clinton's daring approach to immigration, supporting a "path to citizenship" for undocumented immigrants already in the United States, is clearly the right one. The Republican Party is insane if it conducts a 21st-century immigration policy based on stereotypes from the 1980s. □



Smoking, Vaping and Nicotine



JOE NOCERA
© 2015 New York Times

"We need a national debate on nicotine," said Mitch Zeller.

Zeller is the director of the Center for Tobacco Products, a division of the Food and Drug Administration created in 2009 when Congress passed legislation giving the FDA regulatory authority - at long last! - over cigarettes. In addition, the center will soon have regulatory authority over other tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, which have become enormously controversial even as they have gained in use. Through something called a "deeming rule," the center is in the process of asserting that oversight over e-cigarettes.

Opponents of electronic cigarettes, which include many public health officials, hope that the center will treat these new devices like it treats cigarettes: taking steps to discourage teenagers from "vaping," for instance, and placing strict limits on the industry's ability to market its products. Proponents, meanwhile, hope that the center will view e-cigarettes as a "reduced harm" product that can save lives by offering a nicotine fix without the carcinogens that are ingested through a lit cigarette. In this scenario, e-cigarette manufacturers would be able to make health claims, and adult smokers might even be encouraged to switch

from smoking to vaping as part of a reduced harm strategy.

When I requested an interview with Zeller, I didn't expect him to tip his hat on which direction he wanted the center to go, and he didn't. Indeed, one of the points he made was that the FDA was conducting a great deal of scientific research - more than 50 studies in all, he said - aimed at generating the evidence needed to better understand where to place e-cigarettes along what he calls "the continuum of risk." Zeller is a veteran of the "tobacco wars" of the 1990s, working alongside then-FDA Commissioner David Kessler, who had audaciously labeled cigarettes a "drug-delivery device" (the drug being nicotine) and had claimed regulatory authority. Zeller left the FDA in 2000, after the Supreme Court ruled against Kessler's interpretation, and joined the American Legacy Foundation, where he helped create its hard-hitting, anti-tobacco "Truth campaign." After a stint with a consulting firm, Pinney Associates, he returned to the FDA in early 2013 to lead the effort to finally regulate the tobacco industry.

"I am fond of quoting Michael Russell," Zeller said, referring to an important South African tobacco scientist who died in 2009. In the early 1970s, Russell was among the first to recognize that nicotine was the reason people got addicted to cigarettes. "He used to say, 'People smoke for the nicotine but die from the tar,'" Zeller recalled.

This is also why Zeller found e-cigarettes so "interesting," as he put it, when they first came on the market.

A cigarette gets nicotine to the brain in seven seconds, he said. Nicotine gum or patches can take up to 60 minutes or longer, which is far too slow for smokers who need a nicotine fix. But e-cigarettes can replicate the speed of cigarettes in delivering nicotine to the brain, thus creating real potential for them to

become a serious smoking cessation device.

But there are still many questions about both their safety and their efficacy. For instance, are smokers using e-cigarettes to quit cigarettes, or they using them to get a nicotine hit at times when they can't smoke cigarettes? And beyond that there are important questions about nicotine itself, and how it should be dealt with.

"When nicotine is attached to smoke particles, it will kill," said Zeller. "But if you take that same drug and put it in a patch, it is such a safe medicine that it doesn't even require a doctor's prescription." That paradox helps explain why he believes "there needs to be a rethink within society on nicotine."

Within the FDA, Zeller has initiated discussions with "the other side of the house" - the part of the agency that regulates drugs - to come up with a comprehensive, agency-wide policy on nicotine. But the public health community - and the rest of us - needs to have a debate as well.

"One of the impediments to this debate," Zeller said, is that the e-cigarette opponents are focused on all the flavors available in e-cigarettes - many of which would seem aimed directly at teenagers - as well as their marketing, which is often a throwback to the bad-old days of Big Tobacco. "The debate has become about these issues and has just hardened both sides," Zeller told me. It's not that Zeller believes nicotine is perfectly safe (he doesn't) or that we should shrug our shoulders if teenagers take up vaping. He believes strongly that kids should be discouraged from using e-cigarettes.

Rather, he thinks there should be a recognition that different ways of delivering nicotine also come with different risks. To acknowledge that, and to grapple with its implications, would be a step forward.

"This issue isn't e-cigarettes," said Mitch Zeller. "It's nicotine." □

Mutts



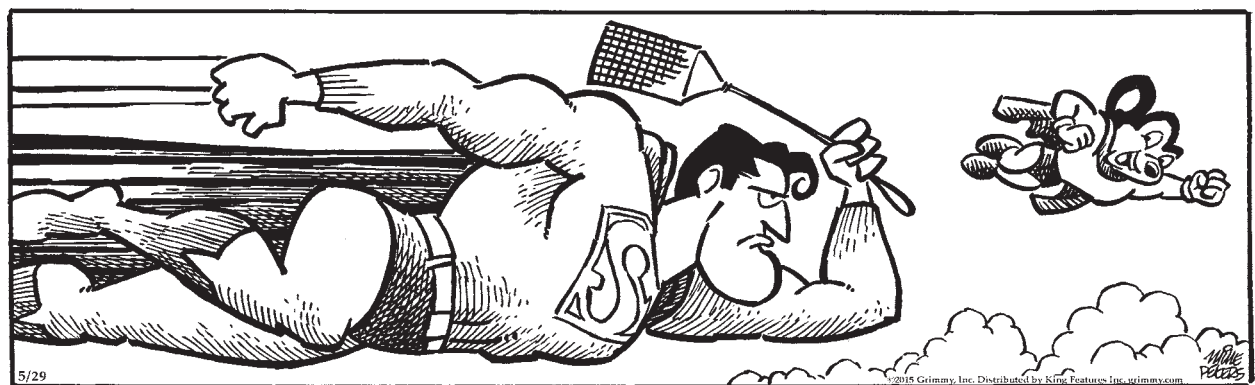
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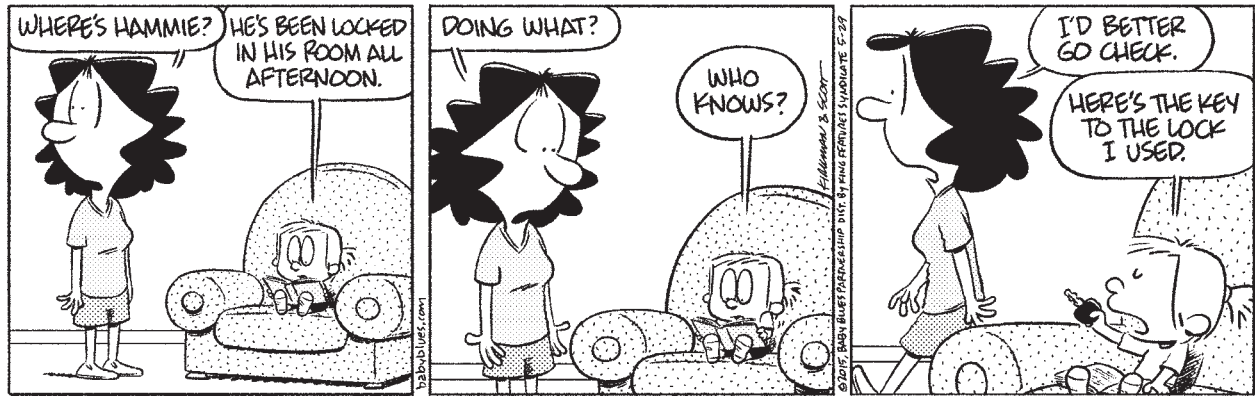
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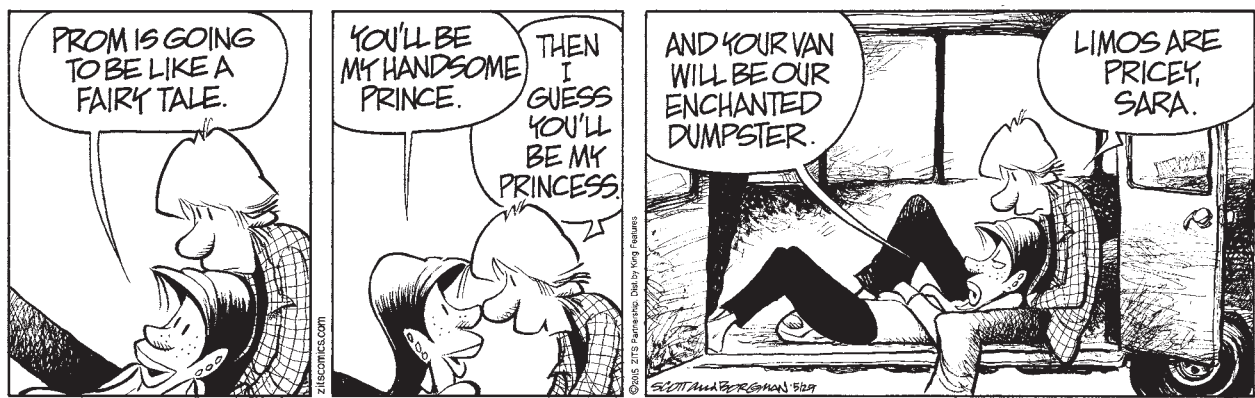
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

			1		3			
		7				9		
	3	8				7	5	
2			8		7			3
				5				
6			9		1			4
	1	5				4	9	
		2				6		
			4		2			

Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 5/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

1	3	4	8	5	6	9	2	7
5	8	6	2	7	9	1	3	4
2	7	9	4	3	1	6	8	5
7	6	3	5	8	4	2	1	9
9	2	8	3	1	7	4	5	6
4	5	1	6	9	2	3	7	8
6	1	2	7	4	5	8	9	3
3	9	5	1	6	8	7	4	2
8	4	7	9	2	3	5	6	1

- ACROSS
- 1 ___ roll; list of star pupils
- 6 Yellowish-brown wood
- 10 Etna's output
- 14 Be a drama queen
- 15 Rat ___; daily grind
- 16 ___ up; spends
- 17 Romney and others
- 18 Suffix for Paul or Ann
- 19 Actor Douglas
- 20 Church spires
- 22 Duster's spray
- 24 Hit the ___; leave
- 25 Alga
- 26 "Alice ___ Live Here Anymore"
- 29 Approximately
- 30 Climbing plant
- 31 ___ card; cash alternative
- 33 Standing straight
- 37 Swerve
- 39 Became irate
- 41 Burrowing critter
- 42 Said no more
- 44 ___ up; fills the tank
- 46 Religious sister
- 47 Prance about
- 49 ___ around; gave orders to
- 51 National
- 54 Firm hold
- 55 Wiped away
- 56 Pragmatic folks
- 60 Curry & Jillian
- 61 Word of disgust
- 63 Nampa's state
- 64 S, M, L or XL
- 65 Penitential time
- 66 Firm refusal
- 67 Soothing drinks
- 68 Nervous
- 69 Say "Hi" to
- DOWN
- 1 Skirt edges
- 2 Leave out
- 3 Short letter

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15				16			
17					18				19			
20					21			22	23			
			24				25					
26	27	28				29						
30				31	32			33	34	35	36	
37			38		39			40		41		
42				43	44			45		46		
			47		48			49		50		
51	52	53					54					
55						56				57	58	59
60					61	62			63			
64					65				66			
67					68				69			

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 5/29/15

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

F	I	G	S		L	L	A	M	A		C	H	A	D
L	O	U	T		A	I	L	E	D		H	O	R	A
I	T	S	A		D	E	L	T	A		E	M	M	Y
P	A	T	R	O	L	S		A	G	E	L	E	S	S
					T	I	E		P	L	E	A	S	
A	T	O	L	L		P	A	S		G	E	A	R	S
P	A	C	E		D	U	N		B	E	A	T	U	P
A	B	C		R	A	T	T	L	E	R		A	L	I
R	O	U	S	E	D		H	A	D		G	L	E	E
T	O	R	A	H		P	E	P		H	O	L	D	S
					R	A	D	A	R		J	A	B	
O	C	T	O	B	E	R		R	A	M	B	L	E	D
D	A	R	N		C	A	B	I	N		L	U	R	E
D	R	U	G		A	D	O	B	E		E	A	R	N
S	E	E	S		F	E	A	S	T		R	U	S	T

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- 40 Actress Winger
- 43 "How ___ you!"; cry of outrage
- 45 Making dirty
- 48 Canoeist's need
- 50 Miss Muffet's terror
- 51 Banquet
- 52 Golfer ___ Els
- 53 Actor Tony
- 54 J. Paul or Estelle
- 56 Pealed
- 57 Rescue
- 58 You, biblically
- 59 Type; variety
- 62 Ruby or scarlet

Kurds

Continued from Page 9

The Iraqi military has struggled to make gains after its humiliating defeats last year, when it virtually crumbled in the face of the militant onslaught in northern Iraq. Poor training, corruption and sectarian politics have all been cited as reasons for the military's shortcomings. The U.S. spent billions of dollars training Iraqi forces from 2003 to 2011, but much of that training did not reach the foot soldiers battling the Islamic State group today.

Last week, U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter criticized the Iraqi army following the fall of Ramadi, the strategic capital of the country's largest Sunni province of Anbar, saying the Iraqi military lacked the "will to fight."

Within days, IS fighters had also dealt a major blow to Assad's forces in Syria, seizing the historic city of Palmyra, a major crossroads linking the capital, Damascus, with territory to the east and west. In images reminiscent of the Iraqi defeat in Ramadi, Syrian soldiers fled the city, leaving behind tanks and ammunition.

By contrast, Syria's Kurds have shown remarkable cohesiveness. Spurred by ideology and nationalistic fervor, they fought ferociously to claw back territory after Islamic State militants captured the Kurdish town of Kobani and dozens of surrounding villages last fall. The IS descent on Kobani led the U.S. to widen its air campaign from Iraq into Syria to assist the Kurds.

Despite the fact that IS had heavy weapons and far more fighters, the Kurds resisted the offensive on Kobani, conducting fierce street battles until the U.S. air-dropped weapons and intensified the airstrikes.

In January, the YPG liberated Kobani from the Islamic State militants and began a wide offensive in which they regained much of the territory they had lost.

On May 6, the Kurdish fighters and their allies launched an offensive from the north-eastern province of Hasakeh and in less than three weeks captured the strategic Abdul-Aziz Mountain along with 221 Kurdish and Christian villages that were held by IS. □

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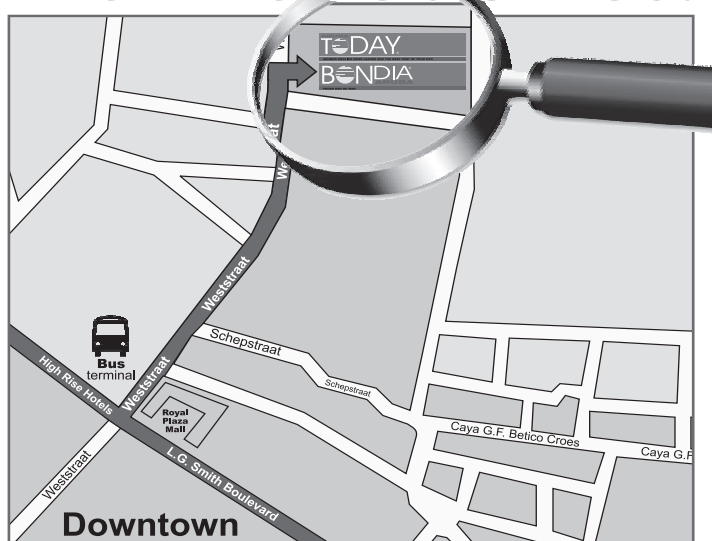
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Elephant numbers plunge in Mozambique because of poachers

CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) —

Poachers slaughtering elephants in Mozambique cut their population almost in half from 2009 to last year, but in Uganda, elephant numbers are increasing as a result of anti-poaching measures, according to aerial surveys.

Poachers have slaughtered tens of thousands of African elephants in recent years to meet demand for ivory, particularly in China. Conservationists and governments have collaborated on an aerial, continent-wide census of elephants to better marshal efforts to protect wildlife. Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen is a project funder.

The New York City-based Wildlife Conservation Society participated in the counts in Mozambique in southern Africa, and Uganda in the east. It said this week that Mozambique's elephant population dropped from just over 20,000 to about 10,300 during the five-year period, re-



In this photo taken Sept. 6, 2014, provided by Wildlife Conservation Society a poached elephant lies in the Mozambican bush after being shot dead by poacher gunfire.

flecting rampant poaching by organized crime rings. The lower number was recorded during surveillance flights between September and November.

Celso Correia, Mozambique's environment minister, pledged action against

poachers, who sometimes work with corrupt state officials.

Under an initiative between the Mozambican ministry and police, a new force has been set up to patrol conservation areas.

On May 12, Mozambi-

can police seized 340 elephant tusks and 65 rhino horns from a house in the city of Matola, according to the Mozambique News Agency. Two Chinese citizens were arrested, police said. On Wednesday, police spokesman Emidio

Mabunda said six officers were arrested on suspicion of stealing a dozen horns from the huge haul, which was supposed to be under police guard.

South African police said they planned to work with Mozambique to test DNA samples of the seized horns to see if they belong to rhinos killed in South Africa. Kruger National Park, a big South African reserve, is often targeted by poachers crossing the border from Mozambique.

In Uganda, elephant numbers have increased to more than 5,000 from fewer than 1,000 decades ago because of improved measures to protect elephants, the Wildlife Conservation Society said. It said the Uganda Wildlife Authority, a state agency that was established in 1996, was key to the success.

Some elephants have migrated to Uganda from Virunga National Park in nearby Congo, where poaching has been severe, the conservation group said. □

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This undated image released by TLC, shows some members of the Duggar family from the reality series "19 Kids & Counting." Associated Press

Hulu pulls '19 Kids' after allegations against Josh Duggar

NEW YORK (AP) — Hulu has pulled the reality series "19 Kids and Counting" from its lineup, following reports of sexual misconduct allegations against one of the stars, Josh Duggar, stemming from when he was a juvenile. Although the streaming-video service didn't confirm removal of the TLC series, episodes weren't found Thursday on the Hulu site, where they had been available as recent-

ly as Wednesday. The show's banishment follows TLC yanking the series from its program schedule last week. The 27-year-old Duggar is the oldest of Jim Bob and Michelle Duggar's 19 children. The family is featured in the show, whose 10th season concluded May 19. TLC hasn't addressed whether its popular show will return for a new season. □

Judge closes book on last Lindsay Lohan criminal case in L.A.

ANTHONY McCARTNEY
AP Entertainment Writer
LOS ANGELES (AP) — For the first time in nearly eight years, Lindsay Lohan is not on probation. Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Mark Young on Thursday ended Lohan's probation in a reckless driving case, closing the last of a series of LA criminal cases that have dogged the actress for years. Young said he reviewed community service logs and determined Lohan, 28, completed her sentence. He praised Lohan's attorney, Shawn Holley, telling her she did an excellent job getting the actress to complete the hours in recent weeks. Unlike many previous proceedings in her criminal cases, Lohan was not present for the hearing. In a statement posted on Twitter, Lohan thanked Holley and the two New York groups where she did her recent flurry of service hours. "Clean slate," Lohan wrote. "Fresh start." Resolving the reckless driv-



In a March 29, 2012 file photo, Lindsay Lohan, right, embraces her attorney, Shawn Chapman Holley after a progress report on her probation for theft charges at Los Angeles Superior Court. Associated Press

ing case was not without its hiccups — Lohan missed a deadline last year to complete her community service, and a prosecutor criticized her efforts, noting she was given credit for meeting fans of a London stage play and other questionable activities. A judge earlier this year ordered Lohan to redo 125 hours of service. Over the years, the actress was briefly jailed five times and sentenced to rehab for a variety of violations ranging from failing to perform her community service to skipping counseling sessions. Since 2007, Lohan was convicted in three cases — a drunken driving and drug case, a theft case filed over a stolen necklace, and a reckless driving case filed after the actress crashed her Porsche into a dump truck on Pacific Coast Highway while on her way to a movie shoot. The drug and DUI case were resolved in 2012, 4 1/2 years after she was arrested twice in quick succession. Despite taking a plea deal that allowed her to avoid jail time, Lohan struggled to comply with the terms of her sentence and was ordered jailed after she missed a court appearance. It took more than 50 court hearings to resolve the trio of cases, with the actress being forced to appear 20 times in person.

Lohan's court appearances had a tendency to become major spectacles, with deputies creating a red carpet-worthy line so photographers could document the starlet's entrances and exits to court. Commentators often critiqued Lohan's fashion and choice of hair color, and someone even showered the actress in confetti as she walked into the Beverly Hills courthouse for one hearing. Drama seemed to follow her into the courthouse. Her feuding parents were sometimes in attendance, and Lohan famously showed up to one hearing with an expletive painted on her fingernails. One of her attorneys told a judge the actress was "ensconced in the bosom" of a rehab facility when in reality Lohan only briefly checked in and was photographed shopping at an electronics store around the time of the hearing. During her first stay at the Betty Ford Center, Lohan got into a fight with a rehab worker. No charges were filed. In another instance, a judge summoned Lohan to court to explain that just because she was serving house arrest, house parties were not allowed. The incidents did little to appease critics, who thought Lohan should be harshly punished for her inability to stay out of trouble. □

Jennifer Lopez looks forward to Morocco's top music festival

RABAT, Morocco (AP) — Singer and movie star Jennifer Lopez expressed excitement Thursday about kicking off Morocco's Mawazine music festival, while insisting she's still just the girl from the Bronx. Morocco hosts the 14th edition of its massive 10-day long music festival starting Friday, this year featuring international stars like Pharrell Williams, Sting, Maroon 5, Usher and Akon, as well as dozens of Arab and African acts. "I'm excited for everyone to see my whole show and experience a Moroccan audience for the first time that way," Lopez told journalists in the Moroccan capital of Rabat ahead of her scheduled performance, adding that she had long wanted to perform in the country's signature music festival. The 45-year-old said the key

to beauty was a healthy life, working hard and not drinking or smoking. "Beauty secrets are really about living a healthy lifestyle and thank god I have since I was young, not that I'm still not young, when I was younger," she said. "I don't drink I don't smoke, I never have, I don't party, I never been a big partyer, I've been more of a worker my whole life." She talked about future projects, including a show at Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas and a police series called "Shades of Blue" with NBC, as well as at least one more season being a judge on "American Idol." "I am still Jenny from the block, that never really leaves you where you are from," said the superstar, who grew up in the Bronx. The Mawazine festival is open to the public and per-



US performer Jennifer Lopez poses for photographers prior to a press conference, during the Mawazine Festival in Rabat, Morocco, Thursday May 28, 2015. Associated Press

formances are mostly free of charge. It started as a way of combating extremism among young people in the country. □

Late-night TV vet Bill Maher forges ahead with hit formula

SANDY COHEN

AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Bill Maher strides into the weekly writers meeting for his HBO show and puts his feet up on the table. His team of scribes, many of whom he's worked with for 22 years, pepper him with ideas and information: the new Republican presidential candidates, the latest outlandish political moves, background on upcoming guests.

Every Tuesday, they brainstorm. And every Friday, Maher brings his pioneering brand of political humor to late night TV on "Real Time with Bill Maher," saying he's "not one bit less engaged" than when he launched "Politically Incorrect" in 1993.

As Jon Stewart takes leave of "The Daily Show" and David Letterman departs the late-night landscape, Maher becomes its resident elder, fearlessly voicing his personal views on TV and on stage, and for the first time, taking his act overseas.

"I'm still standing," Maher said. "I'm like the heterosexual, nonmusical Elton John." A forebear of "The Daily Show" and other comedy-news shows, "Politically Incorrect" lasted nine years, first on Comedy Central,



In this Sept. 2, 2012 file photo, Bill Maher performs at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casinos' Hard Rock Live in Hollywood, Fla. **Associated Press**

then ABC. It was reborn in 2003 as "Real Time with Bill Maher," now in its 13th season. "Real Time" averages 4 million viewers a week, according to HBO, keeping pace with shows helmed by younger hosts. In January, HBO announced Maher would continue with "Real Time" through 2017.

"I'm not sure that Bill Maher gets enough credit for creating this space," Larry Wilmore, who borrows from Maher's format on "The Nightly Show," said earlier this year. "'Politically Incorrect' was really a trailblazer

of a show. 'The Daily Show' hadn't started yet, and no one was really doing that type of honest comedic talk in late night."

And the 59-year-old comic is still at it. He criticizes politics and politicians with fervor. Call him a prickly optimist: He's sincere when he offers his opinions and believes hopefully that change is possible in American politics.

"Of course I care!" he said. "It's my country. I want it to live up to its great reputation. It has a great past and it has great ideals, it just got

off course. It became too greedy and selfish."

Even though he used to feel guilty about it ("People shouldn't really get their news from a comedy show."), Maher considers cracking about the news an important responsibility. He wants to fill viewers in on the latest happenings, he said, sneaking some potentially provocative ideas in among the jokes.

"I'm not a reporter. I don't break issues," he said. "What I like to do is break new ways of looking at issues."

"Real Time" is part standup, part interview and part discussion panel. Guests include politicians, entertainers and other newsmakers. Like Maher, executive producer Scott Carter (one of the 22-year guys), thinks about the show constantly, revising copy until air time.

"All the other shows have four or five chances to do our jokes first," Carter said, referring to competitors such as Stewart, Jimmy Kimmel, Jimmy Fallon and others. He keeps watch on their shows and scrubs "Real Time" jokes throughout the week so the material is fresh for Friday.

As executive producer and head writer on "Real Time," Maher isn't afraid to disagree with his creative team or his guests, as he famously did last year in an argument with Ben Affleck about Islam. Whether serious or played for laughs, whether on TV or in his standup, Maher insists he always expresses his sincere beliefs.

"That's the one thing you can count on," he said. "I will accept my own audience booing me, and I think they accept that even if they don't agree with me all the time, at least they know that it is sincere. I'm not pandering to them." □



In this Feb. 7, 2015, file photo, Demi Lovato arrives at the RocNation Pre-Grammy Brunch at RocNation Offices in Beverly Hills, Calif. **Associated Press**

SANDY COHEN

AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When Demi Lovato was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, she was actually relieved.

"Growing up, I felt very, very depressed," she said.

"Even though I was playing concerts and living out my dream, I couldn't tell you why I was upset."

After a family intervention, she sought treatment and learned she has a mental illness.

"I remember smiling and

Demi Lovato is the face of mental health in new campaign

thinking great, OK, so there's not anything wrong with me as a person," she said in a recent interview. "It's actually just a condition that I have and I can do something to fix it. I don't have to be like this forever."

Lovato is sharing her story and encouraging others to do the same through Be Vocal: Speak Up For Mental Health, an initiative launched Thursday by a pharmaceutical company, the National Alliance on Mental Illness and other mental-health advocacy groups. Its aim is to improve treatment options at all levels and erase the stigma around mental illnesses.

"It's not something that anyone should be ashamed of," Lovato said. "The more people talk about it, the more people can come out and get the help they need."

Be Vocal is as much about sufferers voicing their treatment needs as it is about families and communities speaking up for better resources to meet those needs, she said.

Lovato's improved mental state is reflected in her work.

"I'd say my music is a lot happier now!" she said with a laugh.

The 23-year-old entertainer said she's recording a new album, which she plans to

release on Safehouse Records, the new label that she and partners Nick Jonas and her manager, Phil McIntyre, announced earlier this week.

And she'll continue to advocate for mental health, to make depression and other mental illnesses as easy to discuss as diabetes or the flu.

"I didn't understand why I was going through what I was when I was dealing with all of this, and I realized I could share my story and help others," she said. "If that's my purpose for being on Earth, than that's what I want to do. There's so much more to life than just singing." □



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